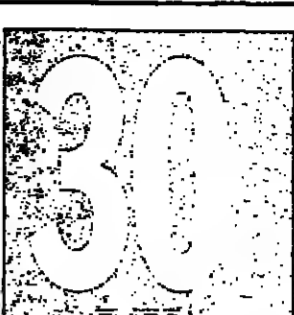




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Why Labour's new women won't make it
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STOCKING FILLER: 20% OFF WHITTARD'S TEAS & COFFEES PAGE 37

Welfare reform is top Cabinet priority

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

THE "something for nothing culture" will come under attack from Tony Blair today as he tries to prevent the battle with the House of Lords overshadowing his second parliamentary programme.

The Prime Minister intends to make welfare reform and modernisation of the public services the Government's central priorities for the coming year, and the Queen's Speech will contain about 20 Bills that will attempt to reassert Labour's reforming credentials, including a promise of a new welfare state "building on the principles of work for those who can and security for those who cannot".

The welfare Bill, which at one time was thought doubtful for the coming session, is now one of the weightiest and most controversial measures. It will prevent all benefit claimants, including lone mothers and the disabled, receiving payments unless they have turned up for job interviews, and it will target benefits for the long-term sick and disabled on those who need them.

The Government believes that many people now receiving state help should be in work, but knows that its efforts to reduce dependency on the welfare state will be met with fierce opposition.

The Bill will also include the first stage of a reform of the pensions system, paving the way for a new "stakeholder" pension.

The programme will also include legislation to scrap the 800-year-old voting rights of hereditary peers and a resubmitted Bill to introduce proportional representation for the next European elections, the Bill defeated by peers last week.

But while the media and the Tories might see Lords reform as the most important element of the Queen's speech, Mr Blair has told Cabinet ministers that, for the country, the centrepiece would be the

health, crime and welfare Bills that tackled "the everyday priorities of their everyday lives".

While the Lords Bill will be supported across the Labour Party, the welfare measure will be opposed in some quarters. Mr Blair, who will foreshadow what he will call "a year of challenge and a year of reform", has said that it will be controversial "but it is right".

He told the Cabinet last week that it would represent a fundamental reform of the welfare state, that it challenged the "something for nothing culture", but that it would at the same time provide real security for those in need.

Mr Blair's ordering of priorities reflects the concern in the Government about the high profile given to its constitutional battles. Ministers believe that Conservatives will try to keep the spotlight on the Lords and while they accept that it will be one of the biggest stories of the next year, they will be trying to get the public to concentrate on other areas.

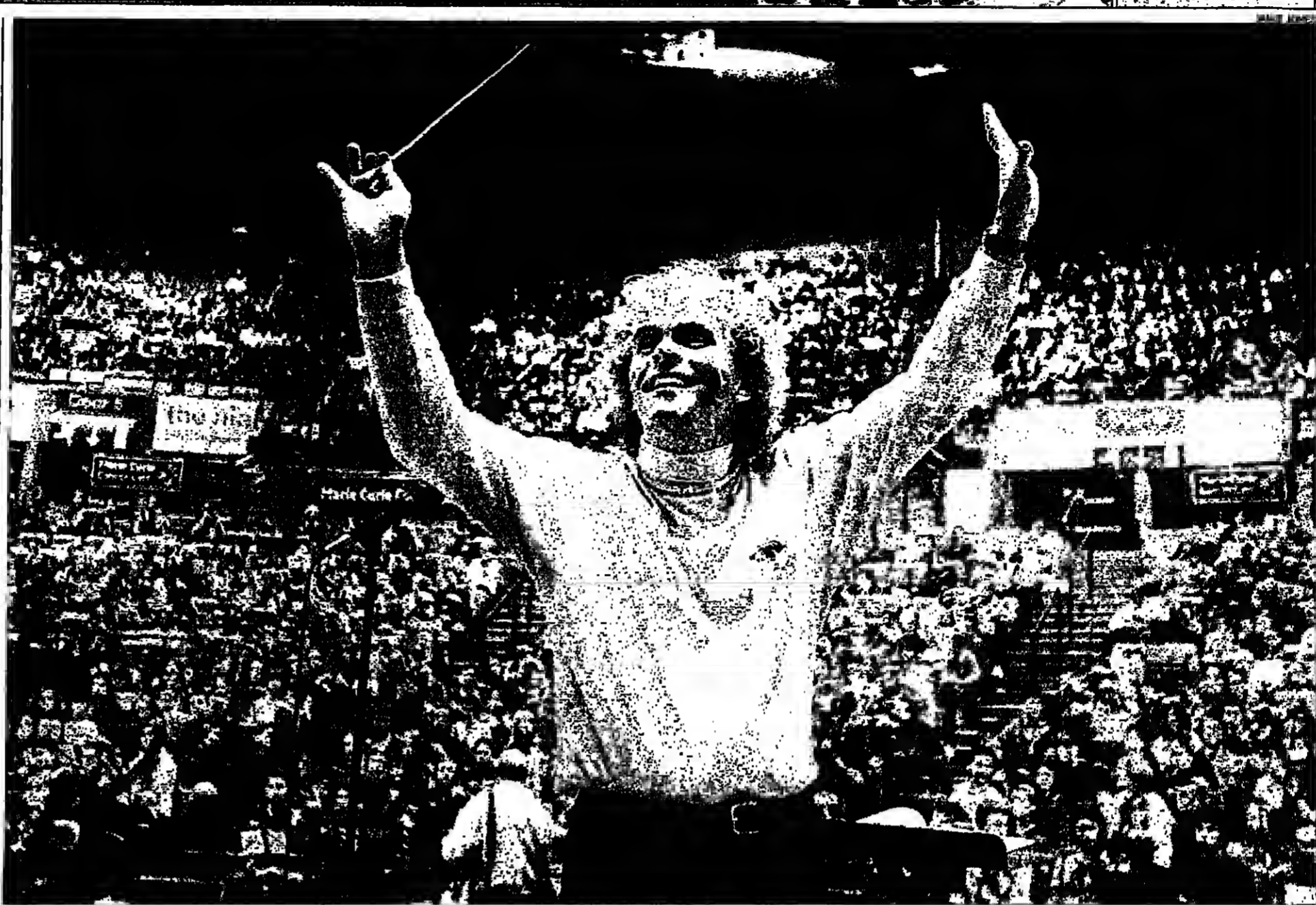
Senior government sources last night highlighted three measures in particular. Frank Dobson's health service Bill will abolish GP fundholding, send hit squads to failing hospitals, and provide stringent new powers to dismiss incompetent medical staff. Jack Straw's anti-crime Bill and John Prescott's local government Bill as measures that would have a big impact on people's lives.

John Prescott's local government Bill will end universal council tax capping, and replace compulsory competitive tendering with a requirement to get best value for money. However, his plans for elected mayors will appear only in a draft Bill and will have to wait at least another year to be enacted.

Jack Straw's crime Bill will modernise youth courts and give greater protection to vulnerable witnesses.

Mr Blair will say that the public services face a year of challenge. With the Government having promised an extra £40 billion for hospitals and schools, the services had to respond with matching reforms. Last week he told ministers that the programme would show that the Government could combine enterprise and fairness — and that a competitive economy and just society could be developed together.

Labour sources claimed last night that only a handful of the Government's 170-plus manifesto commitments had not been implemented or time-tabled.



Sir Simon Rattle and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra with their young accompanists as they beat the record for the world's largest orchestra yesterday

Rattle conducts 3,500 players into record books

By Peter Foster

SIR SIMON RATTLE accomplished two ambitious close to his heart yesterday when he conducted 3,500 children to claim the record for the world's largest orchestra.

Two years ago he failed to beat the existing record after an 11th-hour ruling from the Guinness Book of Records that his group of more than

2,000 musicians had fallen 11 seconds short of the required five minutes' continuous playing time.

But yesterday an ensemble collected from youth orchestras all over Britain played a rousing, if rowdy, rendition of Sir Malcolm Arnold's Little Suite No 2 lasting 7 minutes and 40 seconds. The 79-year-old composer was present to hear the performance. At the same time the company

raised more than £30,000 for the Marie Curie cancer hospice movement, which looked after the conductor's father, Denis, as he died from cancer in 1996. "It was a deeply touching moment," said Sir Simon, plainly exhausted from his exertions after the performance. "It is difficult to say what this means."

After nearly two hours of rehearsals the orchestra, assembled on

banked seating in a vast hall used for filming the *Gladiators* television series, composed themselves for their record-breaking attempt. "Just remember to keep your eyes glued on me," said Sir Simon. "If there's a car crash I'm probably the only person who can get you out."

In the event 1,042 violinists managed to avoid a cacophonous collision with 125 horn players, 546 clarinet-

tists, 115 oboists, 58 tuba players, 77 bassoonists, 142 viola players, 85 double bassists, 144 assorted percussionists, 551 flautists and 377 trumpeters.

Sir Simon shepherded the orchestra while performing a tip-toe ballet. Five independent adjudicators reported back to the Guinness Book of Records authorities who confirmed the record, previously held by 2,212 players of the Kent Music School.

Yeltsin holds bedside talks

Boris Yeltsin held a 40-minute meeting with President Jiang Zemin of China in Moscow's Central Clinical Hospital.

The Russian President had been admitted suffering from pneumonia and is expected to spend up to ten days in hospital. The Kremlin said his temperature had been stabilised by antibiotics. Pages 11, 19

Germans take over Yardley

Yardley, which fell into receivership in August, has been sold to the German hair care and cosmetics group Wella. Wella promised to invest in the brand, which has been promoted by Helena Bonham Carter and Linda Evangelista, and to set up a London office to develop it. Page 27

Hostel stabbing

A female social worker for Wandsworth council aged 51 was stabbed to death while visiting a client at a hostel in Baltham, south-west London. A 26-year-old man has been arrested.

It's over: British beef to go on sale abroad again

FROM CHARLES BREMMER IN BRUSSELS

AFTER the slaughter of 4.4 million cows, a £4 billion bill for the taxpayer and ruin for hundreds of farmers, British beef should be back on sale abroad early next year.

EU farm ministers effectively lifted their export ban last night — nearly three years after the embargo was imposed at the height of the scare over Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease. But continuing German opposition means that it will be left to the European Commission to pronounce a formal end to the ban next week.

Germany voted against allowing British beef back on to world markets, while France, Belgium, Spain and Luxembourg abstained. Italy moved from abstention in the last vote to join the nine others who backed an end to the ban.

Nick Brown, the Agriculture Minister, said: "It is a very good day for us, but it is a better day for the European Commission. It has played fair by Britain." Ben Gill, the

National Farmers' Union who was in Brussels for the vote, said: "It is the best Christmas present we could have."

Mr Brown acknowledged that continuing suspicion of British beef plus a worldwide glut on the market would make it hard to find customers



"How am I meant to remember where we put the passports?"

for a trade that used to earn Britain £700 million a year. "Consumers across the European Union are putting questions on food safety. You can't blame them for doing so."

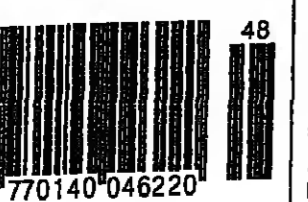
Mr Brown praised the co-operative spirit of Britain's EU partners and said: "The climate has changed enormously since the government was elected." It is widely accepted that the Government's honeymoon with Europe helped to forge the political will among other governments to support Britain in the face of often hostile public opinion and local farmers. EU officials believe that John Major's 1996 "beef war" of non-co-operation stiffened some countries' resolve to maintain the embargo.

Franz Fischler, the EU Farm Commissioner, said that the end of the ban was not just a question of science. "It is a psychological problem and a political problem."

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Summer wine country is vintage Britain

By Mark Henderson

THE moors, hills and dales of North Yorkshire and Northumberland are the best places to live in Britain.

A Times analysis of the Government's new "quality of life barometer" announced yesterday, shows that the towns and villages of the north-eastern counties score top marks for everything from jobs and air quality to wild-life and schools.

In contrast, the borough of Knowsley in Merseyside seems to come off worst. It languishes at or near the bottom of the table for a range of feel-good indica-

tors, including education, unemployment, rubbish recycling and life expectancy. Its river, the Alt, is cited by the Environment Agency as one of the most polluted in the land.

The new measures of "sustainable development" merge traditional economic benchmarks such as Gross Domestic Product and unemployment rates with the quality of the local environment. Good schools, abundant wildlife and clean air are as important for high marks as booming employment. The rural and provincial areas of the North East do well across the board. North Yorkshire makes the top five in the

country for GCSE results and low unemployment, and summer smog — a measure of air quality — is low.

Castle Morpeth in Northumberland recycles more domestic waste than anywhere else and multiple car ownership, an indicator of congestion, is the lowest in the country. The sky-rak population, which has plummeted across the rest of Britain, thrives in the region. The North East also has some of the cleanest rivers in the country — the Wharfe, the Tyne and the Tees.

Knowsley's scores, however, are a tale of misery. Its unemployment rate

of 17.7 per cent is worse than anywhere except Liverpool.

London throws together some of the best and worst places to live. Barnet, with one of the highest life expectancies, and Sutton, with good schools, are matched by poor scores for Camden, Hackney and Tower Hamlets — possibly the runner-up to Knowsley in the misery stakes.

Other blackspots include Liverpool, central Manchester, and Glasgow, while Surrey, Somerset, Cambridge and Hertfordshire are also winners.

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Husband who lost everything sues for £3m

BY TIM JONES



James Williams: nerves are shot, court was told

A PILOT became a broken man after failed intimate surgery shattered his confidence. The High Court was told yesterday, James Williams lost his job, his family and his home, and is now suing the surgeon for £3 million compensation.

Mr Williams had wanted a new foreskin but instead the skin graft turned gangrenous and he almost lost his penis. In spite of five subsequent operations, he was said to be grossly mutilated and suffering from such depression and post-traumatic stress that he was unlikely to fly again.

The once dynamic first officer had earned £66,000 a year flying jumbo jets for British Airways. Since the operation in December 1994, when he was 38, his flying licence had been withdrawn, his marriage had ended, he had been homeless and had lived off the generosity of friends and relatives.

"The effects on him have been catastrophic," Nicholas Leviseur, his counsel, said. "They have been devastating. His moods are volatile. His self-confidence has gone and his nerves are shot. In his own words, he had everything he wanted, and he now has nothing that he wants."

The court was told that Mr Williams, a father-of-three who had been circumcised, decided to have the operation because of discomfort during sex. He was referred to John

they began procedures to save it. In June 1995, the court was told, Mr Williams was back in the operating theatre for 12 hours as he underwent the second of five major revision-surgery operations.

Mr Leviseur said that the operation usually involved taking skin from the scrotum and grafting it on to the penis. But instead, he said, the flesh had been taken from Mr Williams's thigh.

"It was not so much a disaster waiting to happen but in the theatre Mr Pryor did not even use his own operative techniques and after that very unfortunately did not recognise early enough that things had gone wrong and that necrosis had set in. This was not the case of a man having cosmetic surgery as with a woman who has a breast operation to improve her shape. This was a man who had a small but real problem. Mr Pryor failed to warn Mr Williams of the real risks which we say are necessarily associated with this procedure."

Mr Williams, the court heard, was a former RAF pilot who unusually had taught himself to fly civilian aircraft. After his licence was withdrawn BA, "to their very great credit", had kept him on in a non-flying capacity but his earning capacity had been reduced to about £12,500 a year.

Mr Pryor and the hospital deny professional negligence. The case continues.

Reversing circumcision may be stretching a point

BY DR THOMAS STUTTFORD

BECAUSE the penis is at the end of a vascular line, gangrene can complicate several conditions; in one particular form, Fournier's disease, the whole genitalia may be lost. The more common operation for those men who have been swayed by the current anti-circumcision movement and want their glans covered, is to adopt a procedure whereby the loose perineal skin is slowly stretched by the attachment of weights. With perseverance the glans, the head of the penis, is more or less covered. Keeping the glans covered is reputed to preserve its sensitivity but the evidence for this is scant.

Circumcision is, rather surprisingly, adopted more often than not throughout the world, and is *de rigueur* in most, if not all African tribes,

for all Muslims and Jews, and in some far eastern cultures. It is still the rule rather than the exception in the United States. In California, where the opposition to it is most vocal, 70 per cent of white mothers, 91 per cent of Afro-American mothers and 66 per cent of Asian mothers opt for it.

Small babies are looked after by paediatricians who rightly have the baby's immediate best interests at heart. Circumcision, if badly done, can result in haemorrhage or infection. Unfortunately, paediatricians, aware of the occasional dangers, usually recommend against circumcision. However, well after the baby has left their care, the penis will have a sexual as well as urinary role. The circumcised penis is less likely to become infected with HIV, syphilis, her-

pes and lesser diseases like thrush. If circumcised early in life, the man is unlikely to develop either cancer of the penis, or BNO, a sclerosing skin disease which leads to peripheral atrophy.

As for the boy's future sex life, Masters & Johnson report no enhancement of pleasure for the uncircumcised and even suggest that they may be less likely to suffer premature ejaculation. So far as women are concerned, various surveys have shown somewhere between 75 and 90 per cent of women prefer circumcised men in appearance and as a sexual partner.

If circumcised men knew how they were regarded by women, perhaps their hang-ups about their childhood loss would not necessitate plastic surgery.



Joy Murray and her daughter, Elisa Ann, otherwise known as the Countess of Dummore and Lady Elisa Ann, prepare for the State Opening

Outback earl claims his Lords seat



Malcolm Murray: will speak in Lords

MALCOLM MURRAY had always wanted to visit Britain but until this month had never got round to it. In fact, the 52-year-old electrician and amateur astronomer had never left his native Australia. He did not even have a passport.

But when he heard what Tony Blair was planning for the House of Lords, he felt he had no alternative and immediately booked his tickets for London.

For Malcolm Murray might be "old Malcolm" to his friends back home in Tasmania but he is also more correctly referred to as the 12th Earl of Dummore, holder of one of the most distinguished Scottish titles. And the greatest fear in his life was missing the chance to sit in the House of Lords.

So it will be with relief as well as pride that today he dons ermine and takes his seat on the cross-benches for the State Opening of Parliament. Joy, his 46-year-old wife, in traditional evening dress, will also be there, sitting with other countesses. Up in the Royal Gallery will be his daughter Elisa Ann, 17. Tomorrow he will make his maiden speech on constitutional reform before heading for home.

The earl, who has worked for more than 30 years for Australia's civil aviation authorities, acknowledges that Labour's plans to expel hereditary peers prompted him to come to Britain. "I admire the

The 12th Earl, an electrician from Tasmania, had to be there — at least once, reports James Landale

Lords with something which is as highly respected."

His title dates from 1686, when the earldom was created for the second son of the Marquess of Atholl. Among his predecessors, the 4th Earl was the most famous and eccentric. He was the last governor of Virginia and was so keen on pineapples that he brought seeds back home to Scotland, where he grew them in a huge glass house. Such was his enthusiasm that in 1761 he erected a 37ft stone pineapple. It still stands today and is a popular landmark on the old Dummore estates near Sterling.

The title moved to Australia in the late 1970s when the 9th Earl died without male heirs. One of the 4th Earl's children had gone to Australia in the early 1800s as a government geologist and the title passed to his descendants. The title first went to Malcolm's uncle, Reg. But when he died six months later, in 1980, it was passed to Malcolm's father, Kenneth, a local postmaster. He sat once in the Lords, in 1986, and in turn passed the title to Malcolm when he died in 1995.

For all his enthusiasm, the earl is phlegmatic at his impending expulsion. "My father was the first Tasmanian in the Lords. I am the second and, it appears, the last. But I have sat in the House of Lords and no one can take that away from me."

'Passion sank Atlantic bid' 15 years in jail for Hell's Angel

BY SHIRLEY ENGLISH AND JAMES BONE

BY ADRIAN LEE

THE transatlantic rowing expedition that ended in mutiny collapsed after the crew found its captain drunk and in bed with a woman picked up at a bar, it emerged yesterday.

Last night John Langley, 25, a marine geophysicist, was the first crew member to arrive back in Britain. He said: "To call us mutineers is outrageous. It was not the hardship that made us turn back. Our concern was our safety."

The crew was marooned in Cape Verde but gave its autocratic captain, Roy Finlay, one chance to achieve the feat of crossing by rowing boat. The 16 crew members say that instead of repairing the generator as he promised, Mr Finlay borrowed their last money to go on a drinking spree.

They voted to abandon ship, leaving him to continue with one of the original team on the *Atlantic Endeavour*, and returned the adventure of a lifetime.

Last night Mr Finlay, 36, was marooned on the island of St Vincent. He told a friend that his crew members were "cowards who had no stomach for the rigours of the Atlantic crossing".

Mr Langley said that on the last leg, from the Canary Islands to Barbados, the generators were running low on oil and the crew could not convert sea-water into drinking water. The electricity failed, knocking out the navigation lights.

The crew alleged that Mr Finlay ordered it to keep rowing through the night, which is against maritime law.

Mr Langley said that when the crew got up after an evening on St Vincent, it noticed the captain was in bed with a woman. "For us it was the last straw. He just did not seem to care."

A MEMBER of a Hell's Angels gang was jailed for 15 years yesterday for his part in a feud that resulted in the death of two rival bikers.

Despite the long sentence given to Ronald Wait for conspiracy to cause grievous bodily harm, no one has been convicted of the murders in a case beset by fear, intimidation and the bikers' code of silence. Police were frustrated at almost every step as terrified witnesses refused to testify and one man who survived refused to identify his assailant.

Wait, known as Gut because he weighs 20 stone, was captured only because an Italian photographer, Ramak Fazel, noted the number of his getaway car on a napkin. The trial judge yesterday gave him a £250 reward for his bravery.

Charges against two other Hell's Angels, Barry Hollingsworth, 37, and Raymond

Woodward, 35, were dropped because of lack of evidence. Both were former members of the Outcasts gang who had defected to the Hell's Angels.

After four days deliberation a jury was unable to reach a verdict on a murder charge against Wait, 44, from Dagenham, East London. He is a leading figure in the Essex chapter of the Hell's Angels, known as the Hatcher Crew. The Crown said that it would not seek a re-trial.

Bitter rivalry between the Angels and the Outcasts culminated in the killings of Malcolm St Clair, from Catford, South London, and David "Keith" Armstrong, a former soldier in the Royal Irish Regiment. Both men, in their mid-30s, had just arrived at a concert of Fifties music, in Battersea, southwest London, in January when they were set upon in the street.

Girlfriend sued for 'stealing sperm'

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

A MAN who never wanted to be a father is suing his former girlfriend for getting pregnant, in an historic case which challenges the legal framework of parenthood.

Peter Wallis, who says the responsibilities and costs of being a parent were thrust on him against his wishes, is accusing his former girlfriend Keltie Smith of "stealing" his sperm.

Mr Wallis, 36, an estate agent in Albuquerque, New Mexico, claims that Ms Smith, 37, a receptionist, is guilty of "intentionally acquiring and misusing" his

semen by having sex without telling him that she had stopped taking birth control pills. He is seeking unspecified damages to reimburse him for the "economic injury" of helping support the child over the next 18 years.

"I doubt I'll get anything [in damages]," Mr Wallis said earlier this month. "Out of this, the only thing that I really want is for some judge or jury to say [that the pregnancy] is wrong."

Ms Smith, who denies that the pregnancy was deliberate, says that she is "dis-mayed" by the lawsuit. She has not asked him for financial contributions, and has called on him to leave her and their one-year-old daughter Taylor in peace. The

case, in a New Mexico state court, is attracting nationwide attention by questioning whether the asymmetries currently embedded in the legal framework of parenthood are profoundly unfair to men.

Many lawyers expect the case to be thrown out. But if it survives, it will be seen as a test case of issues which will be raised ever more often as more children are conceived outside marriage or long-term relationships. Lobby groups for the rights of men and fathers, which are enjoying a flush of popularity, have seized on the case.

Ms Smith says that she had not stopped taking oral contraceptives, but that they inexplicably failed.

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Cost of the beef ban keeps mounting

Destruction of cattle must continue as producers try to woo back export markets, Michael Hornsby reports

A HUGE mound of meat and bone meal, the ground-down remains of thousands of slaughtered cows, is piled in a disused aircraft hangar near Grantham in Lincolnshire, a mute memorial to the cost of the beef ban. A total of 340,000 tonnes of such material is being kept at 12 locations round Britain and 70,000 more tonnes are being added to the stockpile every year. It will continue even after the lifting of the beef export ban.

Fibrogen, a power generator, has been awarded a contract to burn 255,000 tonnes over three years to produce electricity but the company still needs planning and environmental consent.

The waste came from some 2.7 million cattle slaughtered after May 1996 simply because they were more than 30 months old and regarded as a greater BSE risk than younger animals. Destruction of the older cattle will continue indefinitely because the lifting of the export ban only applies to beef from cattle between the ages of 6 and 30 months.

Altogether, 4.45 million cattle have been destroyed since 1988 because of BSE. Of those, only 174,000 were actually confirmed to have been infected with the disease. The others were culled as a precaution.

Among those destroyed were 1.5 million animals for which no commercial market could be found. Normally they

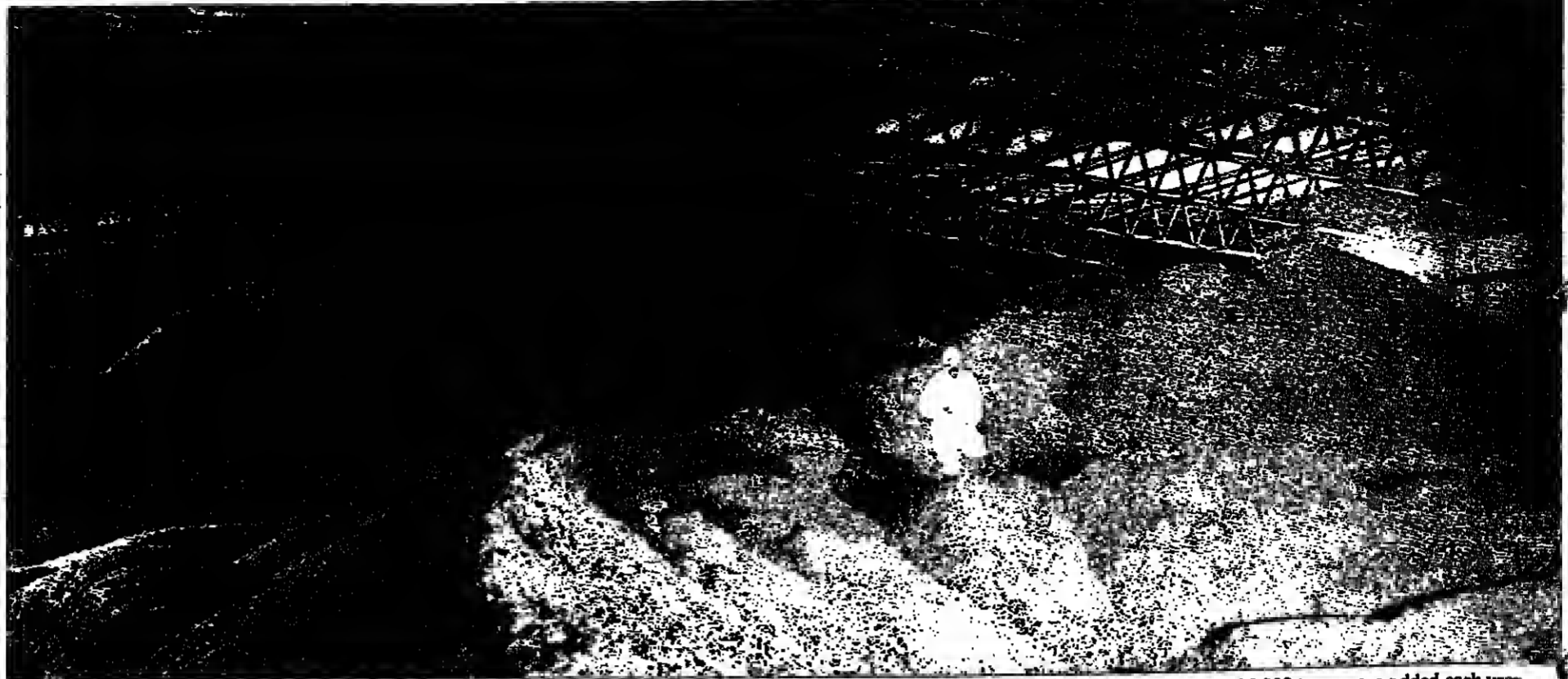
would mostly have been exported live for veal. Because the export of live cattle is still banned, their slaughter will continue at least until the spring, when it will be reviewed by the Government.

As part of the deal on lifting the ban, the Government must also destroy a further 12,000 cattle that are the offspring of cows that died of BSE.

The National Audit Office estimated in July that the cost to the taxpayer of government measures to combat the BSE over the 24 months to the middle of this year at £2.5 billion. About 60 per cent of this was compensation to farmers forced to slaughter cattle. Most of the rest of the cost was accounted for by extra subsidies to farmers and assistance to the rendering and abattoir industries. By 2001 it is estimated that the extra public expenditure will have risen to more than £4 billion.

Britain faces a tough battle to recapture foreign markets, despite the decision to ease the 32-month-old export ban. The Meat and Livestock Commission, the government-appointed quango that promotes meat consumption, believes that Britain would be lucky if beef exports had returned to 10 per cent of their pre-ban level by the end of next year.

Thousands of pamphlets are to be sent to media organisations, consumer groups, wholesalers and retailers



A hangar at Grantham holds part of the 340,000-tonne stockpile of meat and bone from animals destroyed as a precaution against BSE. A further 70,000 tonnes are added each year

across Europe to explain the measures that have been taken to make British beef safe.

The first beef is not expected to leave Britain much before March next year because EU inspectors will have to satisfy themselves that abattoirs processing the meat are complying with all the conditions set for the lifting of the ban.

In 1995, the last full year before the ban was imposed, Britain exported 242,000 tonnes of beef worth £518 million and

earned a further £79 million from the sale abroad of live cattle, mainly calves for veal. The great bulk of this trade was with the rest of the EU.

Some 80 per cent of beef previously sent to France, which took 43 per cent of all UK exports, came from old cows slaughtered at the end of their working lives, and was used mainly in processed and manufactured meat products.

"Our aim is to get exports back to something over 20,000

tonnes by the end of next year," Terry Lee, head of exports at the MLC, said. "That would be about 10 per cent of the former level."

"We will be concentrating on the quality end of the market and part of our task will be to reassure other EU countries that we will not be flooding them with cheap beef, even if that were possible given the current strength of sterling."

"By next March we hope to be selling beef again to hotels

and restaurants in Italy, which was always a good market. It will be harder to persuade retailers and supermarkets on the Continent. Outside the EU, South Africa, which imposed £24 million of UK beef in 1995, is keen to resume imports but is hampered by the collapse of the rand."

The promotional leaflet produced by the MLC, *British Beef Returns*, details all the changes made by the UK beef industry to satisfy European

preconditions for re-entry to the export market. The A4 leaflet, which is available in all major European languages, explains how the lifting of the ban will work and assures customers that no beef will be exported from Britain until full inspections are carried out by European officials.

The European Consumer Organisation, which represents consumer bodies across the EU, said that confidence in British beef was still low. "The

general feeling among consumer groups on the Continent was against lifting the ban," Joanna Dober, a spokeswoman, said. "On the Continent it is still the belief that BSE is very prevalent in the UK."

In fact, the number of new cases of BSE this year is not expected to exceed 2,100, compared to more than 36,000 six years ago. Scientists believe there will be no more than a few hundred a year by 2001.

Currie calls for compensation for the victims' families

Inadequate ministers 'caused deaths', reports Michael Hornsby

EDWINA CURRIE called for government compensation to relatives of BSE victims yesterday, saying that people had died because of inadequate action by ministers.

Appearing before the BSE inquiry, the Tory former Health Minister said: "I would hope that the inquiry might at some stage turn its mind to compensation for the individuals concerned. I feel that more people became ill, more people became infected and more people died because of inadequate action by government ministers over a long period of time."

"To me, that is a classic case of compensation and we have compensated people in similar circumstances or parallel circumstances before. I

would very much like to see that recognised as a reflection of the responsibility that is carried by ministers."

Neither the previous Conservative administration nor the present Government has accepted any financial responsibility for victims of new-variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, which most scientists accept is BSE in humans beings, probably caused by eating infected beef. Some 30 people have died from the new strain of CJD since 1995.

Mrs Currie, a junior minister from 1986 to 1988 who was forced to resign over the salmonella-in-eggs furore, absolved herself and the Depart-

ment of Health from any direct responsibility for what went wrong in the handling of BSE, laying the blame at the door of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, which she described in earlier evidence as "crass and incompetent".

She contrasted MAFF's efforts to tackle the BSE crisis with what she claimed was the highly successful approach of the Department of Health in dealing with Aids in the 1980s. The Health Department had made it a top priority to develop a diagnostic test for the early detection of Aids, she said. It was a "disgrace" that there was still no comparable test for

detecting cattle incubating BSE. "If you are going to make progress, you need to be able to test whether the disease is present, and preferably before it has killed its host," she said.

"In my view, if MAFF had said in 1986-87 'let's get research done to create a test', it would have been available a short time later and it would have been possible to identify sick animals and have taken action very much more quickly."

Mrs Currie was asked what she thought of the assurances by agriculture ministers in 1990, after she had left the Government, that British beef was safe to eat. She said: "I had

a lot of sympathy for ministers trying to cope with a background of a dearth of information. They were required to say something."

But she added: "I think Sir Donald Acheson (former chief medical officer) was right to say that they could have been more cautious." Her approach would have been to tell the public every scrap of information, adding: "If I had then been asked 'do you still eat beef?' I would have said yes. I am not sure I would have fed hamburger to one of my children, but there you go."

In May 1990 John Gummer, then Agriculture Minister, had his daughter to eat a beefburger in public. Mr Gummer is among more than 20 former Tory ministers due to appear.



Currie yesterday; contrasted BSE with Aids action

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A 13-point guide to your quality of life

Nick Nuttall and Alexandra Frean report on a plan for better growth

THE Government's latest salvo of statistics gives a more rounded picture of modern Britain than bare economic indicators. John Prescott said yesterday.

The Deputy Prime Minister said that the "quality of life barometer" was designed to reflect people's concerns about health, housing, jobs and the environment. The statistics would allow people, business and policymakers to see at a glance how their own actions might create wealth without destroying the environment.

"We are aiming for cleaner growth. It is a matter of gain, not pain; generating jobs and prosperity in a way which uses energy more wisely, creates less waste and pollution and is fairer to all in society," he said.

The quality of life barometer will comprise 13 key indicators from birdlife and greenhouse gas emission to employment levels and life expectancy. They are outlined in a consultation document, *Sustainability Counts*, published by the Department of Environment yesterday. The 13 indicators in the barometer are:

□ Populations of wild birds: farmland and woodland birds have generally been in decline since the mid 1970s. Populations of some farmland birds such as the skylark and corn bunting, and of woodland birds such as the song thrush and willow tit, have fallen by more than half.

□ Emissions of greenhouse gases: UK emissions of the "basket" of greenhouse gases fell by 5 per cent between 1990 and 1996. Emissions of carbon dioxide (the main contributor) fell by 8 per cent between 1990 and 1997. It is now universally recognised that greenhouse gases are one of the greatest environmental threats because they are causing global temperatures to rise.

□ Days of air pollution: in urban areas the average number of days when air pollution was recorded as moderate or worse fell from 62 days in 1993 to 40 days in 1997. In rural areas the average number of days per site rose in the late 1980s but has since remained at about 40 to 50 days a year.

□ Road traffic: motor vehicle traffic in 1997 was more than eight times that in 1950 and car traffic in particular was

more than 14 times higher. □ Rivers of good or fair quality: nearly 95 per cent of the river network in the UK is assessed as being of good or fair quality, which means it is generally capable of supporting fish and can be used readily as a source for drinking water supplies, following treatment. □ Average life expectancy: this is increasing and is now about 74 years for men and 79 years for women. However, the number of years people can expect to live in good health is some years fewer, and men in manual occupations generally have five years lower life expectancy than those in professional jobs. □ Educational qualifications at age 19: in 1996, 72 per cent of 19-year-olds had achieved qualifications NVQ level two or equivalent (five GCSEs at grades C or above).

□ New homes built on previously developed land: in England about 55 per cent of new homes (including conversions) are now built on previously developed land. The Government has set a target of 60 per cent to be achieved by 2008.

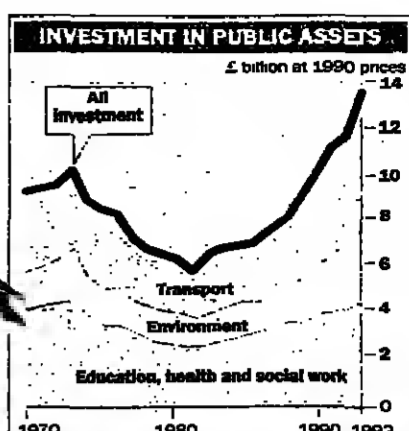
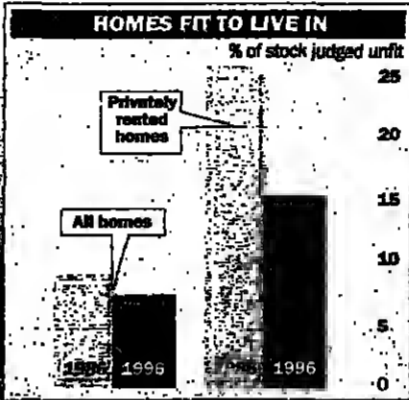
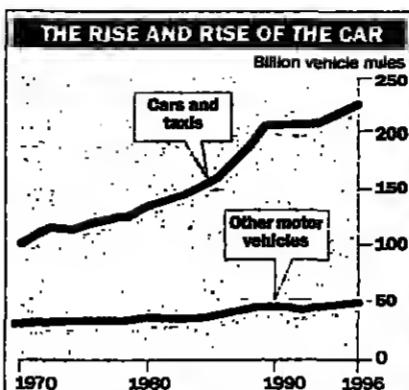
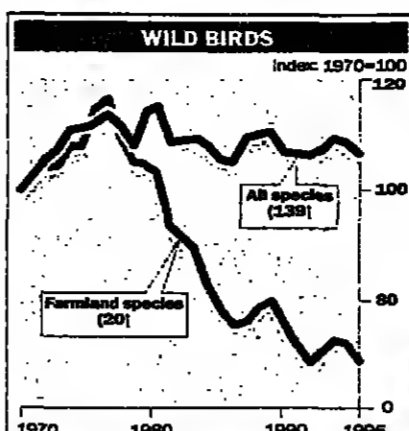
□ Waste and waste disposal: about 145 million tonnes of waste are produced each year in the UK by households, commerce and industry, including construction and demolition. More than 60 per cent of this — around 90 million tonnes — is disposed of in landfill sites.

□ Homes judged unfit to live in: the proportion of these decreased from 6.8 per cent in 1986 (in England) to 7.2 per cent (about 1.5 million) in 1996. □ Economic growth: total output of the economy (GDP): since 1970, the output of the economy has grown by 80 per cent in real terms, around 2.3 per cent per year on average.

A SYMBOL OF DECLINE

In drafting the new, sustainable development indicators, 20 common farmland and 41 woodland birds have been chosen to map the ups and downs of animals and plants (writes Nick Nuttall). For example, the skylark, a farmland bird, has slumped in numbers by 60 per cent, or three million breeding birds, in the past quarter century. The biggest decline has been in the arable farming areas of the south east. Its last strongholds are in a band up the east coast through Yorkshire and Northumberland into Scotland, according to John Marchant of the British Trust for Ornithology. The damage is caused mainly by intensive agriculture which robs the birds of the seeds and other foods it needs to thrive.

READING THE SKYLARK INDEX



WHERE TO LIVE:

THE BEST AND THE WORST

| GDP | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Inner London (West) 418% | E Lothian and Midlothian 56% |
| Unemployment | |
| Surrey 3.1% | Liverpool 18.3% |
| Life expectancy (men) | |
| Cambridge 76.6 | Manchester 69.9 |
| Education | |
| Isles of Scilly 91.1% | Kingston-upon-Hull 21.4% |
| Air pollution (rural) | |
| N Yorks (=best) 17% | E Sussex 32% |
| Traffic congestion (2 or more cars) | |
| North East 17% | South East 32% |
| Water | |
| Among best: Wharfe, Tyne, Tees | Among worst: Irwell, Ait |
| Wildlife (skylarks) | |
| East Coast | South East |
| Land use | |
| London 87% | South West 37% |
| Waste (Recycling) | |
| Castle Morpeth 31.9% | City of London 0.4% |

THE GOOD: NORTH YORKS, NORTH EAST

GDP: 126% national average (York)
Unemployment: 3.5% (N.Yorks, 3rd)
Life expectancy (men): 74
Education (5Cs at GCSE): 54.0 (5th)
Air pollution: Low smog
Traffic congestion (2 or more cars): 17%
Water: Wharfe, Tyne, Tees among best rivers
Wildlife: Healthy skylark population
Land use: 47% new homes on derelict land
Waste (recycling): 31.9% (Castle Morpeth)



THE BAD: KNOWSLEY

GDP: 71% (E Merseyside)
Unemployment: 17.7% (2nd worst)
Life expectancy: 72.4 (95th/105)
Education: 23.4 (2nd worst)
Air pollution: High exhaust levels
Traffic congestion (2 or more cars): 24%
Water: Ait among worst quality rivers
Wildlife: Few skylarks
Land use: 65%
Waste (recycling): 1.3%

Film-makers hope football satire will score US detains aid volunteers

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

A FILM satirising England's soccer team, managers and the Football Association is to be made with £2 million of National Lottery money.

Behind it are Duncan Kenworthy, who produced *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, and Andrew Macdonald, the producer of *Trainspotting*. DNA Films — Mr Kenworthy and Mr Macdonald's partnership — has been given

£29 million from the lottery to create a mini-studio to revive British cinema, and make 16 films over five years.

They are going for projects with big box-office potential. Steve Coogan (BBC's "Alan Partridge") will play the title role in *The Probation Officer*, and Amy Jenkins, creator of *This Life*, has written a teenage romance.

The midfielder and coach-turned-actor Vinnie Jones, who this year made his acclaimed screen debut in *Lock*,

Stock and Two Smoking Barrels, has been chosen to star in *Mike Bassett: England Manager*. The makers want the Manchester United legend Eric Cantona, the Wimbledon and Jamaica midfielder Robbie Earl, and the television presenter Jim Rosenthal and John McCrick to join in the fun.

Mike Bassett: England Manager, set during some future World Cup, has been scripted by Rob Sprackling and John Smith. The characters include

"Roza", who, according to Mr Sprackling, is "a Geordie who is completely ridiculous". The captain, "Tony Harper", is "like Tony Adams, Stuart Pearce, Terry Butcher. He will get his head cut and keep going. He keeps missing penalties at crucial moments but otherwise will never let you down." Mr Sprackling said the FA deserved criticism; some saw them as "a load of stuffed shirts running a game that is nothing to do with them".

By ADRIAN LEE

BRITISH aid volunteers were threatened with imprisonment by United States immigration officials as they flew home from Honduras after helping victims of Hurricane Mitch. They were held for six hours and fined a total of £1,200.

Yesterday, as they flew into Heathrow, the nine men and a

woman complained of aggressive treatment. The volunteers had worked for two weeks in appalling conditions in Honduras, where up to 7,000 people died. Their duties involved recovering bodies.

The group, members of the charity Rapid UK, based at Okehampton, Devon, obtained a lift home on a cargo plane owned by an Anglo-Rus-

sian company. During a stop at the McConnell military airbase at Wichita, Kansas, an immigration officer said their paperwork was not in order.

Last night the US Immigration Service said that the party did not have a visa waiver form that is available free to Britons. There were no plans to refund the fine. "It was their mistake," a spokesman said.

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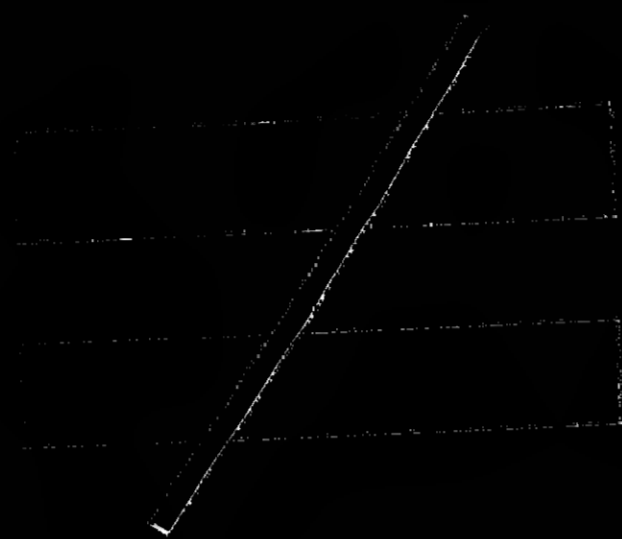


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Former inmate wins challenge over condom ban

A FORMER prisoner won the right yesterday to bring a test case challenging the Prison Service's refusal to allow condoms to be freely available in jails.

Judges allow test case over 'an irrational and perverse' policy, reports Richard Ford

Leon Daniel, counsel for Mr Fielding, from London, said that the case raised an issue of public importance, because prisoners who might be unaware they had picked up HIV might infect others on their release.

Lord Bingham added that it was now argued that it was irrational that medical officers should not be free to prescribe condoms to "serving prisoners who admit having sexual relationships with other inmates".

had been transferred to the privately run Blakenhurst jail near Redditch, Worcestershire, and supplied with condoms. His request had previously been refused at Leicester prison and Little Hey jail near Huntingdon.

Wolves reject a cub as manager

By Helen Johnstone

EDWARD HAYCOCK'S application for the job of manager of Wolverhampton Wanderers featured an impressive list of victories — including taking the League Cup and the European Cup in a year.

But a letter from John Richard, the Wolves' chairman, telling him "thanks, but no thanks", ended his dreams with a ruling that, at seven years old, he did not have enough experience.

Edward, from Romsey, Hampshire, has played Ultimate Soccer Manager for two hours a day since his father, David, bought it a year ago. The Wolves supporter got the idea of applying for the job when Mark McGhee left the First Division club last month after a string of poor results.

He told the club about his experience at managing and picking teams, as well as buying and selling players. He said: "The most successful I have been was with Real Madrid once. I have coached lots of other teams and have done quite well. Dad could do all the books and Mum could wash the kit while I pick the team."

Wolves said: "Edward's letter raised a few smiles around the office and we would like to thank him for his interest."



Edward Haycock computer success

Prisoners used paper planes to smuggle drugs

Chief Inspector expresses his concern after ruse is discovered during inspection, reports Richard Ford

PRISONERS throw paper darts over the perimeter wall of a jail to obtain drugs and other contraband, according to an inspection report published today.

the governor had told him that drugs were a problem in the jail and that inmates held on F wing were happy to stay there because of the availability of illegal substances.

different financial resources were allocated to different prisons containing the same kind of inmates. "This means that there are some category C prisons in which a prisoner can expect better treatment, and more opportunities of work and education, than are available in Stafford, which must be wrong."

Inmates in two wings close to the wall at Stafford jail attach lines to the end of the darts and then haul the contraband back into the prison grounds. Sir David Ramsbotham, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, discovered the smuggling during an inspection at the jail and says that he is concerned that two wings are extremely close to the perimeter wall and that drugs were available throughout the jail. "We saw numerous strips of paper which had been used as darts to throw lines over the wall to obtain drugs and other contraband," his report says.

Sir David's report is also highly critical of the overcrowding and the under-resourcing at the jail, which held 615 prisoners compared with a certified normal accommodation of 568 inmates. He said that budget reductions had resulted in a cut of 29 per cent in the provision of education since April and that more cash was vitally needed for full employment to be achieved.

"Treatment and conditions should not be a lottery, depending on the part of the country in which a prisoner is held," he says.

The chief inspector says that grilles had been fitted to some cell windows in an attempt to prevent inmates throwing darts over the wall. But the grilles fitted to the windows had easily been broken by prisoners who wanted access to the wall.

Richard Tilt, Director-General of the Prison Service, admitted that the report was critical but said that there had been improvements at Stafford. He said he was satisfied that the problem of drugs getting into the prison over the wall had been dealt with.

The Prison Service has put rolls of razor wire on top of the perimeter wall to stop inmates throwing paper darts over it and has installed closed-circuit television cameras to improve monitoring of the walls.

His report calls for further action at the jail to prevent inmates in F wing from getting articles passed over the perimeter wall. Sir David said that



Ramsbotham: concern over cuts in education



Shane Fitzgerald erects a Gaelic "for sale" sign at Ballynahowa, Galway, after boards using English were defaced

Signs of strife over Irish tongue

By Audrey Magee, Ireland Correspondent

IRISH language campaigners in the west of Ireland are forcing many estate agents to turn "For sale" signs into Gaelic, to the bewilderment of English-speaking prospective buyers.

issues property details in Gaelic. "These people have a certain amount of right on their side because I am using English in an Irish-speaking area," he said. But Brian Forde, an estate agent in Barna, refuses to yield to protesters who have spoilt 25 of his signs since August. He said: "I like the Irish language. I love it, but I am not going to be bullied into using it by a tiny minority in the community. In the past they blacked out English road signs, leaving tourists wandering around the place like headless chickens. I am not giving in to them."

4 per cent of people in the Irish Republic speak Irish fluently but there is a resurgence of interest in the language, with classes across the country booked up. Businesses are being asked to erect bilingual signs and to use Irish to greet visitors to the country.

Shane Fitzgerald, an estate agent in Galway city, switched to Irish after three signs costing £200 each were spoilt. He now puts up signs in the Gaelic, or Irish-speaking areas, along the Galway coast that proclaim *Le díot* (For sale) and

Mr Forde cleans his English signs and puts them back up. One of his clients takes in his "For sale" sign every night and re-erects it each morning. Only about

The use of English remains crucial, particularly to estate agents in the west, who sell a lot of property to people from England, Germany, The Netherlands and the United States.

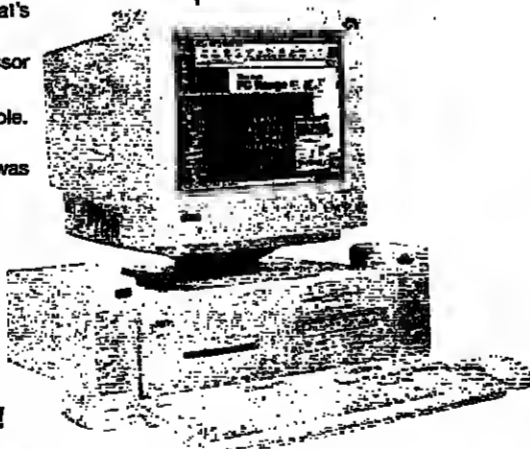
But Peadar Mac Fhianacha, a spokesman for Conrad na Gaeilge, a government-funded Irish language group, said: "When it comes to property, people can read Irish in the same way people can read French, if they want to."



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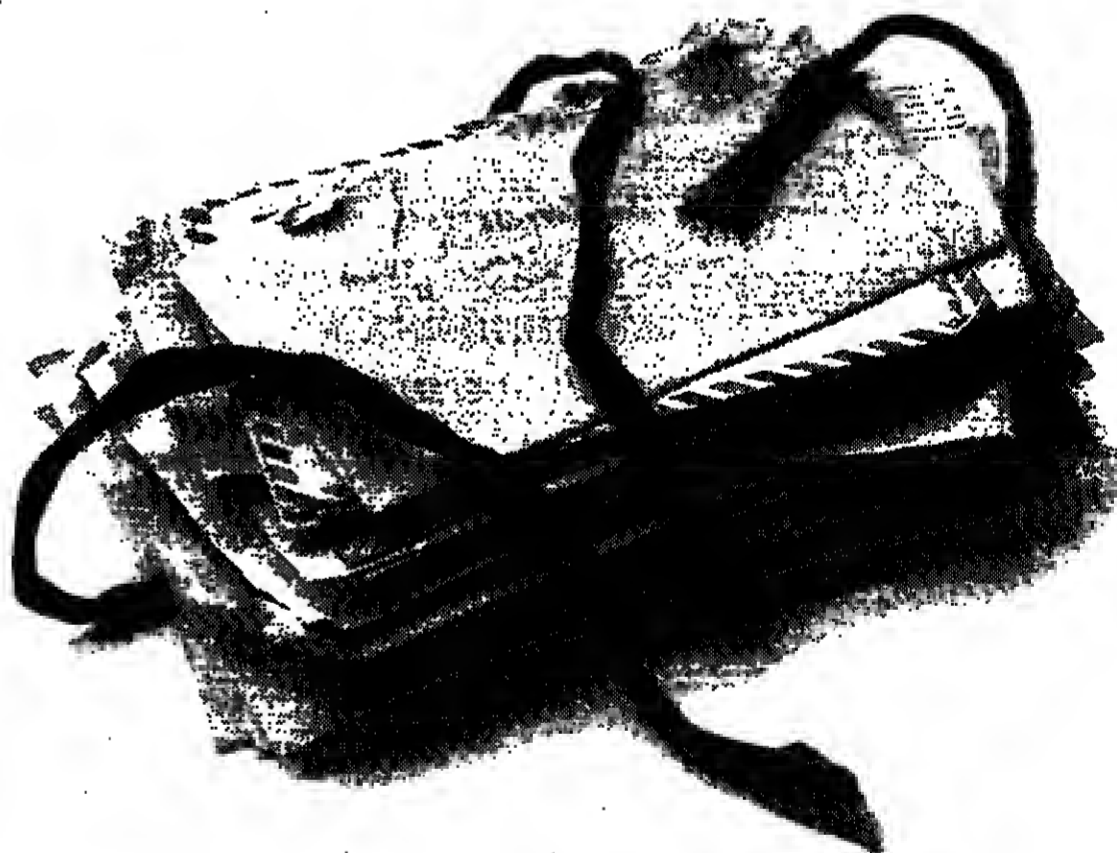
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Chance meeting at bus stop saves boy's life

BY SIMON DE BRUKELLES

A 21-MONTH-OLD boy dying from meningitis owes his life to a chance encounter at a bus stop.

Ashle Sharp's mother, Alex, was carrying the youngster, unaware that he was seriously ill. But Marie Lord, a fellow passenger who was also waiting to catch a bus at Dartington in Devon at the weekend, recognised the symptoms of meningitis.



Able woman at bus stop saw signs of meningitis

She immediately ran to a phone box and dialled 999. Within minutes the child was fighting for his life in an ambulance heading for Torbay Hospital. Another few minutes and medical staff say he would almost certainly have died.

Able was transferred to the Bristol Children's Hospital, where yesterday his condition had improved from critical to stable.

The two women had never met before their encounter at the bus stop. Mrs Lord, 38, who has three children of her own, said: "I was waiting for the bus to go into town when a woman came over with a baby slumped over her shoulder."

"I'll talk to anybody. You do when you're bored at a bus stop, so I asked if the toddler was tired. She said no, she

thought he had flu. I had a look at him and his lips and face were a deathly blue and grey. Also he was very floppy. I asked her whether he had a rash and she said she thought not. I pulled up Able's T-shirt and there was one on his stomach.

"I just froze. It was then that I knew it was meningitis. In the ten minutes he was there, the boy had gone from barely opening his eyes to almost unconscious. There was no way she had time to wait for the bus and go to the doctors."

Mrs Lord rushed to the phone box, where a man she knew was making a call. She said: "I yanked him out of the box and phoned for an ambulance." Speaking from Able's

bedside, Miss Sharp, 33, said: "I am so grateful to her. She saved my son's life. Every doctor here said it was a miracle we caught him in time and that is all down to Mrs Lord."

"I'd never met her before. When she pulled up his T-shirt and saw the black spots, she said she thought it was meningitis. She dropped her bags and ran to the phone. I thought she was being a bit dramatic. I could have just ignored her..."

"On the way to the hospital Able's decline was horrifyingly rapid. He had to be oxygenated — it was like he was dying in front of me. If it had been literally a couple of minutes later, he might not have survived."

Asked how she had been so sure of her amateur diagnosis, Mrs Lord said: "The publicity about meningitis in the media had just stuck in my mind. I'm sure anyone else would have done the same thing. It's every parent's worst nightmare."

A Devon ambulance spokesman said last night: "The ambulance and paramedics concerned would like to pay tribute to Mrs Lord, whose quick-thinking undoubtedly saved the boy's life. We would encourage anyone in an emergency to dial 999."

Yours sincerely... Liszt

BY DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

PREVIOUSLY unpublished letters by Elgar and Liszt and photographs of Paganini and Tchaikovsky on which the composers had scribbled signatures and snippets of their music are included in an archive donated to the Royal Academy of Music.

The collection, valued at more than £2 million, has been given by a former stu-

dent, Norman McCann, who is suffering from cancer. He became an artists' agent with a reputation for recognising talent, bringing stars such as the tenor Placido Domingo to Britain for the first time.

The archive includes letters and manuscripts from leading composers and conductors, rare song collections and silk programmes dating back to

the 1820s for first performances of many operas in Europe and America. It will form a centrepiece of a museum to be established next to the academy in Marylebone, London.

The signed photographs — probably the largest such collection — feature musical quotations from known works and a few snippets not yet identified.



Step back in time: "Visitors to Pompeii walk over floors so there is no reason why they should not in Dorchester"

Stepping softly into Roman past

BY SIMON DE BRUKELLES

VISITORS will be able to start the new millennium by stepping back almost 2,000 years on to intricate mosaic floors discovered in Britain's most complete Roman town house.

The red and white geometric patterns in ceramic and limestone are being excavated at the 14-room ruin at Dorchester, Dorset. But instead of being kept off the ancient floors, visitors will be encouraged to walk, carefully, across them.

The Colliton Park site should be open to the public by the start of 2000. Lawrence Keen, Dorset county archaeologist, said: "Visitors to Pompeii walk over the original floors so there is no reason why they should not do the same thing in Dorchester."

"We were considering a series of flying walkways above the mosaics but having seen them at other sites in Italy we decided they would ruin the look of the floors and diminish



The complete floorplan of the Roman house is visible

the visitors' experience of them. We have decided instead to let people walk over the mosaics, which gives a wonderful feeling of being in touch with the past. We will closely monitor the wear and tear on the flooring and it may be that we have to step in at some stage in the future to protect it but we hope not."

The location of the house had been known for more

than 60 years but this is the first proper excavation. Mr Keen said: "It is the only complete floor plan of a Roman house in Britain. There are quite a few country villas but all the town houses have been built over. The site was investigated but at the outbreak of war it was covered and has been left like that ever since."

This year's excavation was made possible by a £300,000

grant from the county council. Mr Keen added: "We are delighted with what we have found. The mosaics are in fantastic condition considering they have been under earth for so long. There is significant damage from ants and tree roots in some rooms but in one room, which we think must have been a bedroom, the mosaic is still complete."

Dorchester was founded as Durnovaria between AD70 and AD80 by Roman invaders. By AD130 the town was surrounded by defensive ramparts and in its northwest corner was the large private house, surrounded by light industrial units, mainly engaged in metal work. The house was largely abandoned by 400.

It is now protected by a new glass and stone structure built on top of the original knapped-flint foundation walls. The county has asked applied for a lottery grant to assist with funding for the project, which includes an education centre.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Abduction case man remanded

A man appeared in court yesterday charged with kidnapping Charles Seiga, 58, a businessman who was allegedly tortured during a 30-hour abduction. Brian Airey, 28, from Wavertree, Liverpool, was also charged with causing grievous bodily harm and two firearms offences. He was remanded in custody until December 1 by Liverpool magistrates.

Baxter recovers

The former Scotland footballer Jim Baxter is recovering in Glasgow's Victoria Hospital after a heart scare. It was confirmed, Baxter, who has had two liver transplants, was said to be in a stable condition in the coronary care unit.

Soldier's victory

The Ministry of Defence has agreed in the High Court to pay former Rifleman Sean Hogg, 27, from Plaistow, East London, £350,000 for injuries to his knee caused when a helicopter crashed in Ulster while trying to avoid a bird flock.

Case of robbery

An armed robbery trial at Minshull Street Crown Court, Manchester, was adjourned for 24 hours after a thief stole a case containing the papers and court costume of Mohair Wig and black gown of Peter Warne, a defence counsel.

Prince's post

The Prince of Wales has become patron of Britain's biggest breast cancer research group. Breakthrough. Delyth Morgan, its head, said: "The most important thing is that it shows that breast cancer is not just a female issue."

Badger watch

Police in rural areas around Cardiff are spraying badgers and their setts with an anti-crime theft to foil baiters. The spray, designed to protect property, rubs off easily on to baiters, their spades and dogs.


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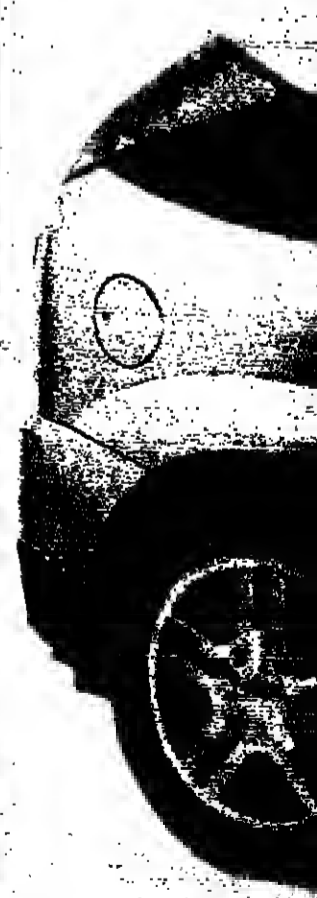


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We are enthusiastic millennium party p...
Mark Henderson



NEWS IN BRIEF

Abduction case man remanded

A man appeared in court yesterday charged with kidnapping...

Baxter recovers

Former Scotland footballer Baxter is recovering from a heart attack...

Soldier's victory

A British soldier has won a High Court case against the Home Office...

Case of robbery

A man charged with robbing a bank in London yesterday...

Prince's post

The Prince of Wales has written a letter to the Millennium Commission...

Water wars

Water companies are expected to start a price war...

We are not enthused by millennium party plans

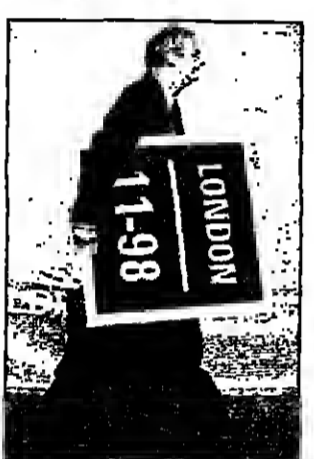
Mark Henderson on a new £500,000 roadshow to fight apathy in the UK

ALMOST half the population thinks that Britain's £2 billion investment to celebrate the millennium will not affect them at all, a new poll for the Millennium Commission has found.

Only 3 per cent of Britons polled by MORI last month said that they thought the celebrations would mean "a great deal" or "a fair amount" to them personally. Eleven per cent said they would benefit "a little" and fewer than one in 20 thought that the celebrations would be of much benefit to them personally.

The figures will add to the concerns about the low profile of projects outside London, which led the commission yesterday to launch the Millennium Voyager, a £500,000 roadshow that will tour 23 towns and cities promoting local plans for 2000.

Commission officials are worried that the mass of publicity about the Millennium



Chris Smith at the roadshow yesterday

Dome—much of it negative—is stealing the limelight from the plethora of other buildings and investment schemes across the United Kingdom. Expensive regional capital projects such as the Earth Centre in Doncaster, which has been given a £50 million grant, and the Eden Project in Cornwall, a £37.15 million investment, have largely been overlooked as the media and the public focus on Greenwich.

A scale model of the Dome on display in the Millennium Voyager was covered up at yesterday's launch of the roadshow. Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, said that the Dome was "interesting and important" but that other celebrations across Britain were just as significant.

"It is vital to get the message across that the Millennium is for the whole country. It is not just about London or the Dome at Greenwich, important though that will be," he said.

Mike O'Connor, the director of the Millennium Commission, said that the poll's findings were disappointing but would soon be reversed.

"For most people, the benefits of the Millennium Commission's spending are some way off, so it is not surprising that few think there will be something in it for them," he said. "Only 23 of the 188 projects we have funded have opened and we have yet to get the message over that 3,000 sites all over Britain will gain from the celebrations. It will be a revelation to people when it is all finished."



Martyn Farr, of the South Wales Caving Club, examines part of the Dan yr Ogof caves before drilling to discover the missing part of the system

Cave men find underground labyrinth

BY SIMON DE BRUXELLES

GEOLOGISTS and mining engineers believe they have found an unexplored cave system up to ten miles long in the limestone hills of South Wales.

Cavers have spent years searching for the caverns in the Brecon Beacons National Park. Ten miles of caves, some of which are open to the public, had already been explored but dye put into underground streams indicated that at least the same distance again remained undiscovered.

After years of fruitless searching for an entrance, two mining engineers from the nearby Tower Colliery were called in and made the breakthrough at the weekend.

The engineers, guided by advice from Keith Ball, a geologist, bored three inch-and-a-half holes in the roof of the Dan yr Ogof showcaves at Abercraf, near Swansea. Each time their diamond-tipped drill found new caverns, one at least 10ft high, which are believed to be connected.

The caverns, formed by water percolating through the soluble



limestone since the rock was formed 315 million years ago, are likely to be filled with spectacular stalagmites, stalagmites and other rock formations.

Experts are also hoping they may contain archaeological remains, including evidence of the prehistoric residents known to have occupied other caves in the area up to 3,000 years ago. One of the new caves was just feet from Dan yr Ogof's Bone Cave, from where the remains of 42 Bronze Age people were excavated in 1912.

Ashford Price, the cave complex's manager, said: "People lived

in the Bone Cave right up to Roman times. It was probably a place of refuge during periods of danger, such as when chieftains were leading. As one of the new caves was separated from the Bone Cavern by just a few feet it is possible there will be human remains in there as well.

"Finding a previously unrecorded system like this is an event which maybe happens once every 30 years. We knew there were miles and miles of tunnels down there but finding the 'trap door' has proved impossible.

"We are very grateful to the miners who have shown us a possible way in. Now we want to see what we have found while causing as little damage as possible."

The explorers are now looking for a fibre-optic camera that can be threaded through the borehole to determine the best place to cut a new tunnel through to the largest of the three new caves. Once a conservation expert has given the all-clear, members of the South Wales Caving Club will cut through the rock and begin exploring the new system.



Mr Farr and Clive Jones prepare to drill

Guerrilla matrons go to war on pylon project

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE ladies of the Women's Institute will become eco-warriors to thwart construction of an electricity power line which they believe will ruin their countryside. The matrons of Middle England will stop short of tunnelling beneath the 229 pylons going up next year across 50 miles of North Yorkshire but they do plan to be as awkward as possible.

Women's Institutes across the county have backed the long-running campaign against the National Grid's £500 million plan to erect the power line through the picturesque Vale of York. The string of transmission towers, some of them 180ft tall, will link a new gas-fired power station on Teesside with the power grid at Shipton, near York.

The company has continued with the project in the face of two lengthy public inquiries and sustained hostility from the county council, the Council for the Protection of Rural England, and William Hague, the MP for the North Yorkshire seat of Richmond.

The project was approved by Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, despite an undertaking by Labour in opposition to reject it.

Protesters have warned contractors that publicans and shopkeepers will not serve them, private farm tracks will be off-limits to their vehicles and local people will shun them. They are also considering digging wildlife ponds on all 229 sites to claim protection under environmental legislation. The county's WI members have also threatened to block construction traffic as it tries to negotiate rural lanes.

Janet Wright, chairwoman of the Women's Institute branch at Sowerby, near Thirsk, said: "We would go as far as possible but we would not break the law, although there may be WI members who will do everything in their power to obstruct the pylons."

expect more

the new ford focus

For your nearest Ford dealer call 0800 777 444. The seven organising publications of the "Car Of The Year 1999" award are: Vi bilägare; AM; Autocar; L'Automobile magazine; Autopista; Stern; AutoVista.

Robinson broke law 12 times, Tories say

THE Tories yesterday submitted a thick dossier to the Department of Trade and Industry with further allegations of breaches in company law by Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster General.

David Heathcoat-Amory, Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, published details of 12 alleged breaches of company law between 1988 and 1992 involving companies linked to Mr Robinson.

It includes a claim that Hollis Industries, of which Mr Robinson was a director, had filed "false" accounts. It alleges that Hollis failed to inform the registrar of companies that he had resigned from his post as director more than six years after the event, in breach of company law.

A summary of the allegations published by the Tories accuses Mr Robinson of appearing to have a "wilful disregard for the laws laid down by Parliament to govern business in this country." It says that even if only some of the allegations are found to be accurate, then Mr Robinson should be disqualified as a director.

Dossier alleging breaches of company rules is sent to Trade Department, writes Jill Sherman

"Some of these allegations set out below relate to criminal offences. Some of the crimes set out below may be punished, if proven, by imprisonment," it says.

The dossier alleges that on June 24, 1991 Hollis Industries' accounts for 30 June 1991 were qualified by the accountants Coopers and Lybrand, as the auditors of the company, on the grounds that proper accounting records had not been maintained.

At the time Mr Robinson was chairman and a director. "It is a criminal offence which may be punished by imprisonment to be a director of a company which does not keep adequate accounting records," the dossier says.

On three separate occasions, Hollis and Sarcad International, of which Mr Robinson was allegedly a director,

failed to file public accounts on time, the dossier claims.

The DTI said it could neither confirm nor deny whether it was investigating Mr Robinson. The Treasury also declined to comment, saying it was a matter for the DTI.

A friend of Mr Robinson last night dismissed the latest allegations as a "silly stunt" by the Tories.

Mr Robinson was forced to make a personal apology to the Commons last week after the Standards and Privileges Committee found he had failed to declare various directorships in the Register of Members' Interests.

The apology came after an embarrassing string of allegations over the minister's business affairs, the most serious of which have been dismissed by the committee.

On Sunday William Hague

called for Mr Robinson's resignation pending a DTI investigation, claiming it would be impossible for one minister to investigate another.

Yesterday Mr Heathcoat-Amory wrote to Peter Mandelson enclosing the dossier and referring to an earlier allegation which he had passed on to the Trade Secretary. He asked Mr Mandelson to report on progress but suggested that the inquiry be handled independently.

"In view of the fact that this will involve one minister investigating criminal law matters involving another minister I suggest that the investigation is not handled by your department, but is instead referred to an independent prosecution service."

The Prime Minister has so far resisted calls to sack Mr Robinson although several ministers think he is becoming a liability to the Government. Gordon Brown, one of Mr Robinson's closest allies, insisted that the Paymaster General kept his job in the last reshuffle but many expect him to be moved out in the next.



Out of the shadows: Rhodri Morgan launching his campaign to become First Secretary of the Welsh assembly

Morgan campaigns against sleaze

RHODRI MORGAN promised a sleaze-free Welsh assembly when he launched his campaign yesterday to become Wales's first "prime minister" (Valerie Elliott writes). The Labour MP made clear that an assembly under his leadership

would be for the people and not the Welsh Establishment. He said: "May 7, 1999 is the day on which Wales stops being administered as a government department and starts being run as a country. That must mean few, if any,

quangos; no vested interests and no narrow sectionalism."

Tyrone O'Sullivan, saviour of the Tower Colliery, will back his leadership bid. Mr O'Sullivan, chairman of the colliery workforce after buying the pit from British Coal, said: "I believe Rhodri is now the natural leader of Wales. Wales is a radical country and we need radical politics."

Mr Morgan also promised to step down as an MP if he became First Secretary, putting pressure on Alun Michael, Tony Blair's preferred candidate, to reveal his plans. An electoral college will not meet until February to de-

cide the choice of leader. Privately Mr Michael's supporters acknowledge that Mr Morgan has a head start and is viewed "with affection" by the Welsh people. But they believe voters will recognise Mr Michael as the more credible candidate.

They dismissed a random telephone poll by the *South Wales Echo* which put support for Mr Morgan at 84 per cent and for Mr Michael at 16 per cent. "We suspect there was a lot of redialling and no checks," said one. Mr Michael's campaign will not start until he is selected as a Labour assembly candidate.

£1.5m spending cap sought for Holyrood poll

By Jill Sherman, Chief Political Correspondent

THE Labour leadership is pressing opposition parties to agree to a voluntary spending cap of £1.5 million for the elections to the Scottish parliament and £800,000 for the Welsh assembly next year.

Although the Queen's Speech today will not include powers to implement the recent Neill report's recommendations on election funding, Labour is now trying to get agreement from the Liberal Democrats, the Tories and particularly the Scottish National Party on a ceiling in time for next year's elections.

Some trade unions are threatening to withhold funds for the Scottish and Welsh elections next May, because of signs that the Government may water down legislation on workers rights. Trade unions have given £185,000 — considerably less than party officials were expecting.

Union officials said last night that there was anger over reports that the Bill was being diluted. Unions had not pledged much cash and were unlikely to offer much support during campaigning.

Labour says it is confident

that it can secure £1.5 million with the help of the Scottish business community and that negotiations with unions are still continuing.

Alec Rowley, the party's Scottish General Secretary, says he has managed to secure agreement in principle from the Tories and the Liberal Democrats to a voluntary cap but the SNP has so far refused to accept his demands.

Lord Neill of Bladen, who suggested the £1.5 million figure, also called for a ban on foreign donations and for full disclosure of donations over £5,000. The SNP has been opposed to a cap in the past, although it changed its position last month.

Labour insisted, however, that the SNP was steadfastly opposed to disclosing donations over £5,000 and banning foreign donations. They argue that a substantial proportion of SNP donors are from the United States.

Yesterday the SNP claimed that it was prepared to sign up to all of Labour's demands. It said it had banned foreign donations and had published accounts in full.

Lib Dems propose own Queen's Speech

Matthew Taylor, the Lib Dems' environment spokesman, yesterday said that his party could not support Labour's drift towards "a new Conservatism", despite the policy of "constructive opposition" (Mark Ingfield writes). His attack came as the Lib Dems unveiled their alternative Queen's Speech. It calls for a European single currency Bill to deal with the euro; this would

help to reduce interest rates and provide "locking procedures" for early entry to the single currency, the party claims. "I do not want to see big issues kicked into the long grass," Paddy Ashdown said. The Liberal Democrats proposed five other legislative measures, including a Freedom of Information Act, a Pensions Reform Bill and a Food Standards Agency Bill.

The Photographs of HG Ponting

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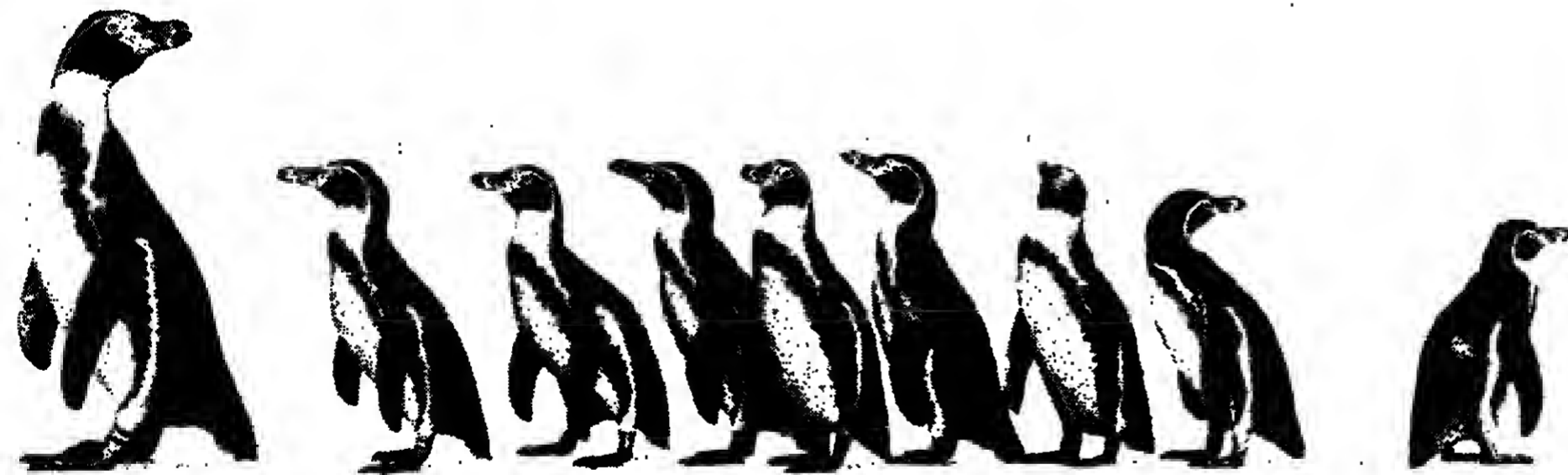
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Ailing Yeltsin holds hospital summit

PRESIDENT Yeltsin was taken to hospital yesterday suffering from pneumonia, reigniting fears about Russia's political stability. In a brave attempt to prove that he is still in control, he held a 40-minute meeting with President Jiang Zemin of China from the somewhat unorthodox location of Moscow's Central Clinical Hospital.

Laid low by pneumonia, Russia's leader is an ever greater liability,
writes Anna Blundy in Moscow

Incapacitated by ill health since early last month, the once boisterous Mr Yeltsin, 67, has handed the day-to-day running of Russia over to Yevgeni Primakov, the Prime Minister, and has limited his own role to brief protocol meetings with visiting dignitaries.

Mr Yeltsin will spend up to ten days in the hospital, the Kremlin said. He was found to have a temperature of 38.9C (102F), but by yesterday afternoon this had been stabilised by antibiotics.

Statements to the effect that Mr Yeltsin is alive and well have been issued every time he has left the public eye since 1989. But on October 11, when Mr Yeltsin nearly fell over at a ceremony in Uzbekistan, it became clear that his condition was serious.

Professor Brian Pentecost, medical director of the British Heart Foundation, said: "A condition such as pneumonia would pose a serious risk to someone in their late sixties who has established coronary disease which may have resulted in heart failure and who has also undergone major

heart surgery to bypass blocked arteries." Mr Yeltsin underwent a quintuple heart bypass in November 1996.

Since the Uzbekistan fiasco, the President has cancelled visits to Malaysia, Austria and India and has failed to appear at a state banquet in honour of Keizo Obuchi, the Japanese Prime Minister. For some months now, Mr Yeltsin has arrived for work in the Kremlin only sporadically. For at least three years, his motorcade has been closely followed by an ambulance at all times.

At brief meetings with Ger-

hard Schröder, the German Chancellor, and Mr Obuchi, Mr Yeltsin looked sickly and distracted. His popularity rating in Russia has dropped to 1 per cent, even lower than that of Mikhail Gorbachev, the man whose very unpopularity gave Mr Yeltsin such credibility in the early 1990s, and his aides are barely able to let him appear in public for fear that he will expose the extent of his incapacity.

Mr Yeltsin's "sore throats", "colds" and respiratory problems do little to explain his forgetfulness, his agonising inco-

herence and slowness, and his evident difficulty standing unaided for more than a short time. His role in Russia's political life is now negligible and his administration has long been fending off demands for thorough medical reports, impeachment and resignation.

Aleksandr Shokhin, the Duma representative of the Our Home is Russia party, has called for joint presidential and parliamentary elections next September, although Mr Yeltsin's term does not expire until 2000.

The alacrity with which Mr Primakov, 69, is effectively performing vice-presidential functions has prompted demands for the reinstatement of the post. Natalya Savvyolova, a Kremlin spokeswoman, said yesterday that such a move would now be considered. "The need may arise at any moment for the Prime Minister to take presidential powers for a minimum of three months," she added.

In the event of Mr Yeltsin's death, resignation or impeachment, Mr Primakov would become President pending elections within three months. Although a reluctant Prime Minister, cajoled into power as a compromise choice during the political crisis in September, he is emerging as Mr Yeltsin's most likely successor. *Sepodnya* newspaper reported last week that Mr Primakov was the Kremlin's choice for President in 2000.



President Jiang Zemin of China during his hospital meeting with President Yeltsin yesterday

Leading article, page 19



Anatoli Onoprienko behind the iron bars of the dock in a Ukrainian court in Zhytomir yesterday at the start of his trial for more than 50 murders

Ukraine 'serial killer' in the dock

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

THE trial opened yesterday in the western Ukrainian city of Zhytomir of a man suspected of being serial killer. A 500-page indictment with grisly details of the murders of more than 50 people was read to the court.

Anatoli Onoprienko confessed during a two and a half year pre-trial investigation to 52 murders, all but ten of them carried out in a three-month killing spree in the winter of 1995-96, when he rampaged across Ukraine, randomly breaking into houses on the edge of villages and killing all their inhabitants.

Pyotr Shchenko, of the Zhytomir prosecutor's office, said the reading of the formal indictment was expected to take up the first three days of the trial. But there is little doubt about the eventual outcome. Mr Onoprienko, 39, is not expected to contest the charges and has himself said he should be shot.

The defendant sat quietly in an iron cage in the courtroom, dressed in a heavy jacket and woolen hat. Next to him in the cage was Serhiy Rogozin, his alleged accomplice in some of the murders.

Investigators are still anxious to uncover details about Mr Onoprienko's activities in the early 1990s, when he is understood to have roamed Western Europe. They suspect that he carried out more murders during this period.

Arts world finds scholarship for casserole maestro hard to swallow

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

ITALIANS, who tend to take a robust attitude to cooking and eating, were yesterday torn between hilarity and disbelief over the news that a prestigious arts scholarship at the Villa Medici in Rome has been awarded to a chef.

The French Academy in Rome has been housed in the Villa Medi-

ci, on the Pincio Hill above the Spanish Steps, since Napoleon acquired it in 1803. For two centuries the French Government has paid for leading artists, writers and composers to spend up to four years of creative study at the Renaissance villa, with its famed formal gardens of shaded groves and hedged walks.

Former Villa Medici students — known as *pensionnaires* — include

the writer André Malraux, painters such as Ingres and David, and composers such as Bizet, Massenet, Berlioz, Debussy and Gounod. But Bruno Racine, the director of the Villa Medici and a passionate gourmet, has long secretly harboured the view that cooking is an art form too.

M Racine yesterday proudly announced that the latest Villa Medici scholar is Xavier Arrey, a rising

star in the kitchens of the Hôtel de Crillon in Paris.

"Mr Arrey is joining a roll of honour that includes great painters and immortal musicians," said *Il Messaggero*, the Rome daily. "Mr Arrey doesn't play the piano, and probably can't even draw a circle with the aid of an upturned wine glass. He uses neither brushes nor pens to express himself. He is an artist of the oven and the casse-

role." Where once Berlioz and Ingres wandered the gardens in straw hats, musing on the classical ruins and statues, the paper said, a cook now searches out herbs and vegetables in his chef's hat and apron. "A soufflé is not an oeuvre, however, and a ragout not the same as a well-constructed play."

Mr Arrey himself appeared oblivious to the controversy as he investigated the Rome street markets, ad-

miring the aubergines and artichokes. "I particularly like the way the Italians work with vegetables," he said, fondling a cauliflower. "And the cheese. Just smell the fragrance of that buffalo mozzarella. Aubergines in breadcrumbs with parmesan cheese — now there's a masterpiece of equilibrium."

He said he had long dreamt of washing his pots and pans in the Tiber. "If he does, his customers

will suffer," said one sceptical restaurateur. "The Tiber has been polluted for years." But *Il Messaggero* was more sympathetic. "We have bravura Italian chefs of great style, but no culinary masters," the paper admitted. "We export pizza, spaghetti and chianti to the world — but we do not export the great culture of Italian cooking, which foreigners who come here seem to appreciate more than we do."



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'Political plot' led to Gaullist suicide

THE theatrical suicide of one of the most powerful officials in southern France was the result of a "political plot", according to his children, who have launched a legal investigation to unravel the mystery of their father's death after finding a bizarre coded message at the dead man's home.

As night fell on November 1, André-Charles Blanc, deputy president of the Alpes-Maritimes regional council and a rising star in the Gaullist RPR party, donned his insignia as a Knight of Malta along with his trademark hat and flowing cape and walked to the cemetery in Théoule-sur-Mer, the Mediterranean town south of Nice which he ruled as Mayor for two decades. At the foot of the town's memorial to the dead, Blanc sat down, pulled out his old service revolver and shot himself in the temple.

His death at 55 came just a fortnight after he had announced his intention to stand in the forthcoming election for Mayor of Cannes, but the incident was at first treated as a

Son finds secret code as death riddle deepens, writes Ben Macintyre



Blanc was poised to win Cannes mayoral race

simple, if gruesomely public, suicide brought on by depression, ill-health and a looming corruption scandal - until his children began to investigate.

On the dead man's desk his 28-year-old son, Emmanuel, discovered a diary with a

series of nine numbers written on it, lying beside an open book.

By matching the numbers with pages and sentences in the book, the son pieced together what appeared to be a peculiar coded message: "Killed... monument to the dead... cemetery... horror... finished off by pistol shots... we shall depart from this world of highway robbers."

Emmanuel insists that before his death his father had been in high spirits, despite the recent death of his wife from cancer, and was eagerly anticipating the mayoral race in Cannes, one of the most important fiefdoms in the South, which he was widely tipped to win.

"He had been subjected to intense pressure, political pressure... Papa had probably suffered some new and terrible psychological intimidat-

ion that caused him, in the space of a few hours, to take his own life. It was something terrible, but as yet we do not know exactly what," insists his son, who has now filed a formal legal complaint demanding a full investigation and alleging that his father was pushed to suicide by persons unknown.

Blanc, who was known as "The Hat" because of his flamboyant dress sense, was a popular politician first elected to the regional council in 1979 and was regarded as a pivotal local politician in the Gaullist party of President Chirac.

Shortly before his death, however, Blanc had learnt that he was being investigated in connection with a kickback scandal dating from 1992. His family insists he was fully prepared to fight the charges involving a building project.

At the foot of the monument to the dead in Théoule lies a wreath, left by Blanc's two offspring, and tied with a ribbon that reads: "Your honour will be avenged."



A lone commuter consults his timetable at Bordeaux railway station as services were hit by strikers yesterday

Rail passengers left stranded by Euro-strikers

By Ben Macintyre

RAILWAY passengers were left stranded in six European countries yesterday as rail workers mounted a combined "Euro-strike" to protest at de-regulation plans that unions claim will erode jobs.

While the London to Paris Eurostar service was unaffected by the strike, just two out of the 20 London to Brussels Channel Tunnel trains were scheduled to operate and two thirds of all trains in France were put out of action.

In Belgium and Greece, the rail networks were virtually paralysed, while Portuguese workers staged an hour-long stoppage before the evening rush hour. However, in Luxembourg and Spain, where workers also joined the action that was organised by the Federation of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Union, the effects were minimal.

The unions are protesting against European Commission plans to promote privatisation in the freight sector. The plans will be considered by EU transport ministers in Brussels next Monday. Rail workers in Britain, Austria, Germany and The Netherlands also expressed opposition to the moves to open up 25 per cent of the freight market to competition within the next decade, but stopped short of strike action.

"Experience of privatisation in Britain, which has brought poorer services at a higher cost, has convinced railway workers in the rest of Europe that it would be bordering on the insane to follow suit else-

where," said Jimmy Knapp, the General Secretary of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers.

Neil Kinnock, the EU Transport Commissioner, said in a statement yesterday that the railways' share of freight transport had declined from 32 per cent in 1970 to 14 per cent in 1996, with major job losses due to inefficiency.

"Without change there will be no rail transport in much of the Union by 2012," he said.

The effects of yesterday's strike were most spectacular in Belgium, where 25-mile traffic jams formed outside Brussels during the rush hour as frustrated rail commuters took to their cars.

In France, the SNCF rail network reported that only one in three trains was operating nationwide, with even fewer on suburban commuter lines. Buses were laid on to ferry stranded passengers from Paris to Brussels, Amsterdam and Cologne in place of the high-speed Thalys trains.

The co-ordinated stoppages were hailed by some as proof that the trans-European strike is now a reality.

Madrid: Spanish officials have unveiled a \$2.2 billion (£1.3 billion) plan to ease the traffic woes of the capital with a network of underground highways.

The plans include a circular road under the city centre with 12 arterial roads, 165ft underground, radiating from it. The scheme is expected to take between eight and ten years to complete. (AP)

Dramatic gesture a first for Stoppard



Stoppard: following in Shakespeare's footsteps

Paris: Tom Stoppard will become the first living foreign playwright to have his work performed at the Comédie Française when his play *Arcadia* opens at the French national theatre here on Thursday (Ben Macintyre writes).

The theatre has hitherto shunned the work of foreign authors until they are safely dead, and both Chris Smith, the Culture Minister, and his French opposite number, Catherine Trautmann, will be present, along with Mr Stoppard, at a special performance on November 30 to mark this dramatic departure from tradition. "The lifting of the ban on living foreign authors, if the play is of genuine value, is the result of a statute passed by the Comédie Française in 1995," Jean-Pierre Miquel, the theatre's administrator, said.

Mr Stoppard follows the venerable path of Shakespeare and Sheridan, whose work was performed at the theatre in the 19th century, but unlike them the 61-year-old author will be on hand to see his own work.

The restriction on living foreign authors, which for 30 years has amounted to a virtual ban on all non-French playwrights, was designed to protect France's writers from com-

petition from abroad. But M Miquel emphasised that the Stoppard decision was a reflection of the worth of his play and not a political gesture.

Arcadia, which was written in 1993, was first performed in French at the Vieux Colombier theatre in Paris at the start of the year.

A Christmas Message

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Iraqis want Saddam tried

Britain backs plan to indict the dictator for war crimes amid new signs of opposition, writes Michael Binyon

BRITAIN yesterday called a meeting of Iraqi opposition leaders to co-ordinate attempts to topple President Saddam Hussein, only 24 hours after a senior Iraqi politician was reported to have escaped an assassination attempt.

Against Iraqi Kurds. "I think it's obvious the crimes have been committed by this leadership," Mr Fatchett said. "I think the campaign is a strong one and one which the international community would find extremely attractive."

that an attempt was made on the life of Izzat Ibrahim, vice-president of the Revolutionary Command Council, in southern Iraq on Sunday. Mr Ibrahim "was the target of a cowardly assassination attempt in the town of Karbala, a Shia stronghold 60 miles south of Baghdad. The Revolutionary Command Council is the country's highest authority. Immediately after the 1991 Gulf War, the Shia rose in a revolt which was brutally suppressed. Two leading Shia activists were recently executed and the Foreign Office cited this as evidence that opposition to Saddam was growing."



Izzat Ibrahim, vice-president of Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council, who was reported to have survived a weekend assassination attempt south of Baghdad

Baghdad rejects UN dossier call

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

IRAQ raised the stakes in its confrontation with the United Nations yesterday by flatly rejecting the chief weapons inspector's request for documents and access to archives. The UN Security Council is expected today to discuss Iraq's continued defiance, with friendly countries such as Russia echoing Baghdad's view that the UN inspectors were being "provocative".

Commission. The two powers now face the difficult task of rebuilding support on the Security Council for any military action against Iraq, with some members now ready to press on with a "comprehensive review" of UN policy that could offer the Iraqi regime new concessions. Although the UN inspectors consider that Iraqi documents are the key to uncovering the country's hidden weapons programmes, Baghdad has sought to portray the search for paperwork as a distraction from the main business of disarmament.

Richard Butler, the chief UN inspector, had requested 12 specific categories of documents from Iraq as the first test of compliance after Baghdad backed down in the face of threatened air strikes.

Iraqi National Congress. Mr Fatchett told the groups that events were moving quickly and they needed to respond. Today they will have talks in London with American officials. Several groups voiced

distrust of Western promises. Nabil Mousseawi, a senior member of the Iraqi National Congress, said: "We don't want them (the US and Britain) to drop their commitments when things get too hot

for them. We had this experience in the past." Baghdad: Saddam was named "Man of the Century" by the Iraqi-Indian Friendship Association, the Baghdad Observer reported. (AFP)

WORLD IN BRIEF

European cold snap kills 62

An Arctic cold wave and accompanying blizzards have killed at least 62 people throughout Europe, according to police and media reports. The weather played a role in at least 24 deaths in Romania and Bulgaria over the past three days. In Poland, 32 people died, most of them homeless. In France, the death toll rose yesterday to six people, three of them homeless men. Fountains in front of the Eiffel Tower were frozen, and in Mouton, in eastern France, temperatures fell to -21C (-6F). About 100 homeless people staged a sit-in at the headquarters of the state-run medical assistance service in Paris to demand better protection in winter. (AP)

Kabila seeks EU allies

Nairobi: President Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo has started a tour of Europe in the hope of gaining support for his beleaguered regime (David Orr writes). He is due to meet President Scalfaro of Italy and the Pope today before travelling on to Belgium and France. In the Congolese capital, Kinshasa, it was reported that Mr Kabila's Zairian military allies had killed 600 rebels in airstrikes on barges on Lake Tanganyika.

Threat to Kurdish TV

London: A Kurdish television station based in Britain was told that it would lose its licence if it did not improve the balance of its political coverage (Michael Binyon writes). The station, Med TV, has been accused of broadcasting propaganda on behalf of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), and in January it was fined £90,000 by the Independent Television Commission for three breaches of impartiality requirements. Yesterday's warning followed further complaints.

Ankara clears leaders

Ankara: Mesut Yilmaz, the Turkish Prime Minister, and Tansu Ciller, right, who was the country's first woman Prime Minister, were cleared by parliamentary commissions of corruption concerning their personal fortunes, a parliamentary source said. The panels decided there was insufficient evidence to endorse Finance Ministry claims that Mr Yilmaz and Mrs Ciller had amassed assets illegally. (AFP)



Tirana protest alert

Tirana: Sali Berisha, Albania's fiery chief opposition leader, called on his supporters to "fill the streets of Tirana" to protest against the Government's apparent victory in persuading voters to back a Western-style constitution. After Mr Berisha's comments, dozens of police vehicles filled the central Skanderbeg Square, which was the scene of rioting and gunfire in September after the assassination of Azem Hajdari, a prominent member of Mr Berisha's Democratic Party. (AFP)

Rapists beheaded

Jeddah: Two Saudi men convicted of raping and strangling a teenage boy were beheaded in the western resort town of Taif. The two men were hitchhiking and were given a ride by the young victim, the official Saudi Press Agency said. After driving to an isolated place and drinking alcohol, forbidden under Islam and banned in Saudi Arabia, they raped and strangled the young man, poured petrol over the corpse and set it on fire before escaping. (AP)

Berlin move begins

Berlin: The office of President Herzog of Germany moved to Berlin, becoming the first federal agency to shift from Bonn to the designated new capital. Parliament, Gerhard Schröder, the Chancellor, and most ministries are scheduled to move next September from Bonn, the capital of the former West Germany. The new oval-shaped office building cost DM94 million (£33 million) and took two years to complete. The building includes busts of previous Presidents. (Reuters)

Netanyahu vows to implement next West Bank pullout

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, pledged yesterday on the eve of talks in London that Israel would press ahead with the second withdrawal from the occupied West Bank in six weeks, despite deep Cabinet divisions and opposition from settlers.

He praised his British counterpart for his backing when "cynics and sceptics" were predicting that last Friday's West Bank withdrawal would not take place. "Tony Blair, in particular, has been very helpful and very supportive," Mr Netanyahu said.

The Israeli leader, who will attend a private Downing Street dinner, said he would discuss new defence co-operation schemes with Britain outlined in a controversial accord signed last week. Mr Netanyahu

used a briefing with British correspondents to dismiss stories in the Hebrew press that he has already decided to invite the opposition Labour Party into a National Unity Government or call an early general election because of right-wing hostility to last month's Wye peace accord.

Referring to the narrow 75 Cabinet majority for last Friday's troop withdrawal and reports that he will be un-

able to secure even such a narrow majority for the second of the three pullouts, Mr Netanyahu insisted that if the Palestinians stuck to their agreements, the Wye process would continue. "What you can see from this narrow margin of approval in the Cabinet is the importance, the premium, that the ministers will attach to rigorous compliance by the Palestinian Authority to the agreement," he said.

Millennium suicide sect found in Israel

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

ISRAELI police have discovered members of a missing American Christian doomsday sect in Jerusalem, where they are suspected of planning a mass suicide to coincide with the start of the new millennium.

About 72 members of the Colorado-based cult known as the Concerned Christians disappeared last month after their leader, Monte Kim Miller, prophesied the apocalyptic destruction of Denver by an earthquake. Although the promised calamity did not happen, many had already sold their belongings and some headed to Israel.

Mr Miller has said he will die in the streets of Jerusalem in December 1999 and be resurrected three days later. A spokeswoman for the Israeli police said a special unit was set up several months ago to deal with messianic sects that might try to create public disturbances as the turn of the century approaches.

A Foreign Ministry official said there was concern about who might enter the Holy Land to mark the start of the new millennium and the Government was attempting to monitor visitors. Experts and relatives of

members of the cult group believe that Mr Miller, 44, who claims that God speaks through him, has the power to persuade his followers to take their own lives. An Israeli police official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it was not clear what the cult members were doing, and whether they posed a threat to themselves or others. "It is not so clear what they want to do. Their ideas have not crystallised," the official said. Bill Honsberger, a Denver cult expert, said the sect would probably move on now that some of its members had been found, and try to set up a new base elsewhere. The discovery of the cult members comes amid fears that religious extremists might try to blow up the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem. About 88 million has been approved to improve security at the site by deploying 450 police officers and installing electronic surveillance equipment. The site housed the Jewish Temple in biblical times, but is now the home of the Muslim holy shrines, al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock.

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THE TIMES
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Beijing lauds Mao's victim as hero

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING

CHINA today marks the centenary of the birth of the chief victim of the Cultural Revolution, Liu Shaoyi, and has been hearing eulogies for the former President who was once the country's most powerful man after Chairman Mao.

But amid the genuine grieving for a Communist leader who is said to have abhorred violence, no one dares to say almost 30 years later that Mao was responsible for Liu's agonising death. "Mao's role remains taboo, though everyone knows he was to blame," said a diplomat.

Liu's widow, Madam Wang Guangmei, now China's most admired woman, wrote yesterday: "In the days full of pain and torture we supported each other and comforted each other. I feel very sad for Shaoyi, but also proud that I experienced everything with him."

Liu - Mao's close comrade-in-arms and chosen successor - became during what is now called the "ten years of madness" the "Number One Capitalist Roader" and was tortured and humiliated by Red Guards, as was his wife.

Mao believed Liu was part of a leadership clique intent on whittling away his power after the famines caused by his failed Great Leap Forward.

Liu was arrested, tortured, expelled from the Communist Party, and sent to a remote city. He died in 1969 of untreated pneumonia on the concrete basement floor of a local government office, and was cremated anonymously. No one knew his fate for years, though he was posthumously rehabilitated in 1980.

His widow, now 77, was honoured at the weekend at a gathering attended by President Jiang Zemin and 6,000 guests in the Great Hall of the People. Last night, however, she was in a Beijing hospital suffering from exhaustion.

During the meeting, President Jiang hailed Liu as "a great Marxist, proletarian statesman and theorist... who is loved by the party, the army and the people even today".

'Playboy cop' exposes art fraud riddle

AN alleged fraud involving \$17.5 million (£10.9 million) and the bogus theft of paintings by Monet and Picasso has been uncovered thanks to a tip-off from a former California policewoman, who made her name shedding her uniform for Playboy.

Dr Steven Cooperman, a retired eye surgeon, had a taste for French Impressionists. In a break in a case that has baffled the FBI for years, he stands accused of having two historic canvasses "stolen" from his Los Angeles home. Having bought Claude Monet's Customs Officer's Cabin at Pourville and Pablo Picasso's Nude Before a Mirror for

A \$17.5m 'theft' of masterpieces has perplexed police, writes Giles Whittell

under \$1 million each in the 1980s, he managed to insure them, with the help of a museum's loan receipt, for a total of \$12.5 million. They vanished from his home the following summer. Despite suspicious circumstances, including no sign of forced entry and an

alarm that failed to go off, Dr Cooperman claimed the paintings' full insured value. When his insurers refused to pay he sued them, eventually settling out of court for a reported \$17.5 million. He retired, rich, to seaside Connecticut.

Meanwhile, the former wife of his lawyer's ex-partner had been talking to the FBI. Robert Vasquez, known to art world fans as the first California Highway Patrol officer to strip for Playboy, had given up modelling and gone to college.

Facing mounting bills, when she learnt that her husband might have been involved in a "theft" for which a \$250,000 reward was now being offered, she turned him in. James Little, a failed actor-turned-lawyer, has been the FBI's main witness in the case since the paintings turned up last year wrapped in blankets in an air-conditioned storage locker rented in his name in Cleveland. Police say that he received them from his former partner, whose clients happened to include the wealthy Dr Cooperman. Facing up to 120 years in jail if convicted, Dr Cooperman has vowed to fight all 16 federal counts against him.

In the meantime, interest has intensified in the helpful Ms Vasquez. A former actress



Monet's Customs Officer's Cabin at Pourville, one of the paintings reported stolen

as well as model, her film credits include Picasso Trigger, a 1988 B-movie about a psychotic art collector who is foiled, the production notes explain, "by our hero and his team of beauties".

Ms Vasquez has claimed that money had nothing to do with her decision to give Mr Little's name to the Los Angeles Police Department's art theft unit. "I didn't do it for any reward situation; I just wanted him away from me," she told the Cleveland Plain Dealer, only to admit in the next breath: "Honestly, \$250,000 would be great. It would pay for my college."

She has several rivals. Pamela Davis, Mr Little's current fiancée, claims to be the one

who led the FBI to the Cleveland storage facility, while a local builder has hired a former judge to sue for the reward after having a chance conversation about the paintings with Ms Davis in a bar and passing on what he heard to federal agents. One character out of

shaved all body hair for a court appearance on cocaine charges. The bald look was apparently a ploy to foil an imminent drug test for which a hair sample would have been taken. The judge at Mr Little's trial called his relationship with Ms Davis a "fatal attraction".

The disgraced lawyer still displayed a touching faith in his girlfriend's motives. "I believe Pam Davis has been irreparably harmed by these paintings," he said. "I believe that if she gets any money from them, she will donate 100 per cent of it to the American Cancer Society in her grandmother's name and the name of my mother." Ms Davis's response at the time: "No comment."

'I didn't do it for a reward, but \$250,000 would be great. It would pay for my college'



Vasquez in Playboy. She reported her ex-husband

TV death doctor invites test case

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

PROSECUTORS are reviewing macabre footage shown on prime-time American television in which Dr Jack Kevorkian administered a lethal injection to a terminally ill patient.

The "mercy killing" advocate has challenged the legal authorities to charge him over the death of the man to ensure a legal showdown on the controversial issues of euthanasia and assisted suicide.

On the CBS 60 Minutes programme on Sunday night, the retired pathologist, who has admitted helping 120 people to take their own lives, was seen in a video injecting Thomas Youk with a series of drugs. Mr Youk, in the advanced stages of Lou Gehrig's disease, could hardly speak or move. He was seen to let his chin fall on to his chest. Asked if he was awake, he did not respond. Dr Kevorkian was heard to say that Mr Youk was "a straight line".

Interviewed on the programme, Dr Kevorkian was asked if he had killed Mr Youk. "I did," he said, and went on to explain that it was the first time he had committed euthanasia. Previously, he had only helped other people to take their lives, and has been acquitted in three wrongful death trials. "I want a showdown," said Dr Kevorkian, 70, who added that if convicted he would starve himself to death in prison.

Pentagon seeks unilateral nuclear disarmament to cut costs

FROM DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN WASHINGTON

THE Pentagon wants to begin a unilateral reduction of America's nuclear arsenal to save on the multi-billion dollar cost of maintaining warheads. Officials have quietly urged the Clinton Administration to make cuts because it faces a huge bill for weapons that should already have been scrapped after agreements signed with Russia.

Under the terms of the Start I and Start II strategic arms reduction treaties, America and Russia agreed to slash their arsenals of nuclear warheads. But the Russian parliament

has refused to approve Start II, forcing an expensive delay in disarmament. Pentagon officials have told President Clinton that a unilateral reduction of the arsenal to fewer than 6,000 warheads would not have an adverse effect on America's ability to deter a nuclear threat, according to a report in The New York Times yesterday.

Because of the Russian delay, America has spent an extra \$95 million (£55 million) in the past two years in maintaining weapons. The Pentagon believes that next year it will spend another \$100 million and billions more to refuel nuclear reactors and provide new missiles on Tri-

dent submarines if the delay continues. A senior White House official told the newspaper that neither Mr Clinton, nor William Cohen, his Defence Secretary, has made a decision on the Pentagon's recommendations and would not do so until Russia's parliament completes its deliberations on Start II.

There is optimism among some in the Pentagon that the parliament will decide that the dire state of the Russian economy makes it impossible to maintain a nuclear force as large as that allowed under Start I. Following the signing of that treaty in 1991, America reduced its ar-

moury of strategic nuclear war-

heads from more than 10,000 to 7,000. Under Start II, both countries would be allowed a maximum of 6,000 warheads, and in 1997 Mr Clinton and Mr Yeltsin agreed that once Start II was ratified they would begin talks on a further reduction to between 2,000 and 2,500.

While officials remained tight-lipped about the highly classified report, which was passed to the White House in April, Admiral Richard Mies, the new commander of the strategic arsenal, suggested in an interview that the cuts could be forthcoming. "I think you will inevitably see us take some unilateral actions that we have to take to modernise

our forces and maybe streamline our forces to some degree," he said. □ Bonn: The new German Government was yesterday heading for its first major argument with the United States as Rudolf Scharping, the Social Democrat Defence Minister, sought to persuade Washington that nuclear weapons should only be used in retaliation and never as a first strike (Roger Boyes writes).

William Cohen, the US Defence Secretary, rejected the idea the Nato should amend its policy, saying ambiguity was integral to alliance strategy. Mr Cohen, who is due to meet with Scharping today, said the policy was in no need of revision.



Scharping: no first use

Advertisement for Braun Oral-B plaque removers. Text: 'A beautiful set of pearls for only £19.99.' Includes image of the product and the Braun Oral-B logo.

Advertisement for SkyDigital packages. Text: 'SkyDigital packages from £6.99 per month'. Includes details about subscription costs and contact information.

The stigma that never goes away

To be honest, I had given up on my gums. They seemed a less than essential part of my anatomy. If you don't keep gums in shape, they may cause trouble later in life. But until recently I didn't honestly think that there would be a "later in life".

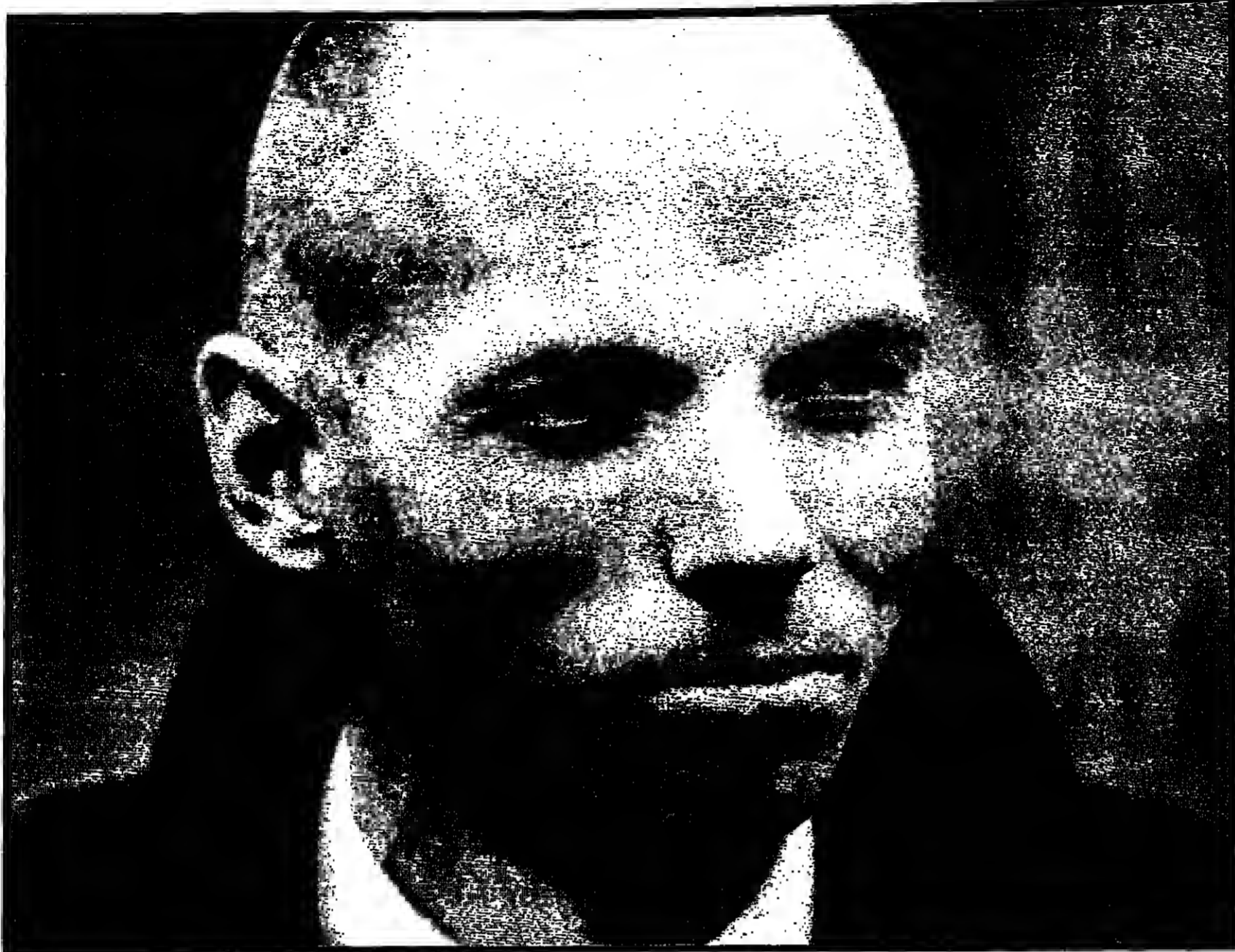
In the past few days a new dentist has changed all that. She looked in my mouth and grimaced, and that was enough. A failing immune system is a recipe for all sorts of disasters, but this one wasn't life-threatening, so I had never taken it very seriously.

It also came down to the vexed question of which dentist to see. She shortly after I learnt that I was HIV positive, in spring 1993, I went for a routine check-up.

"Um, I'd better tell you that I have HIV," I said hesitantly. The dentist looked in my mouth and then looked grave. "Well, you do need work," he said, "but we'd better do it at the end of the day." It turned out that this was so he could sterilise all his equipment afterwards.

"You mean you don't do that with every-

Next Tuesday is World Aids Day. Radio 4 presenter Nigel Wrench, who has Aids, says attitudes are changing — but not as quickly as the treatment that has transformed his life



Nigel Wrench: "The terror runs deep. When I developed fully blown Aids three years ago, I found the word impossible to say"

I think it would have been easier if it had been cancer

one?" I asked, filled with anger. There is nothing like a terminal illness to make you lose your inhibitions about getting angry in public. My dentist mumbled something inadequate, and I left the surgery in a huff.

I never went back, and maybe his attitude coloured my approach to caring for my gums. The dentist had put into words what many people still feel: Aids is an illness to be kept at arm's length. Its unique link between death and sex — and homosexual sex, at that — ensures that the stigma remains.

The terror runs deep. When I developed fully blown Aids three years ago, I found the word impossible to say. I was in a hospital bed, attached to a drip, occasionally gasping for an oxygen mask, ill with PCP, the pneumonia that killed so many people in the first years of the epidemic.

One of my aunts said the word first, on the phone from Shropshire, while I was in the Royal Free Hospital in London.

"So you have Aids now," she said bluntly. I couldn't reply and left one of my friends, usefully a trained social worker, to finish the conversation. That friend was a central part of my gay family, the key

emotional support at a time when all the books that I foolishly read and reread suggested that I might have as little as nine months to live. "Or maybe two years," said a doctor chirpily when I once asked him the forbidden "how long will I live?" question.

Such answers are no longer a shock to our community. For gay people, Aids isn't a stranger but a familiar intruder. It has

hurt or killed someone close to all of us. For gay men, this is a virus whose presence, spoken or unspoken, is there during sex, the most intimate act of our lives. The virus draws people closer and forces conversation about issues that you wouldn't otherwise confront. After all, beyond life, sex and death, what is there?

I sometimes think it would have been easier if it was another sort of terminal ill-

ness, such as cancer. Cancer can be the result of a lifetime's smoking; I became HIV positive after one incidence of unsafe sex. But no one, quite rightly, judges cancer. There's no one to say, as someone once said to me: "It's your own fault then."

Parents might still be frightened, but there would at least be ways to understand: ways that don't involve understanding homosexuality into the bargain.

For my mother, living alone in a fishing village near Cape Town, Aids is terrifying. I'm the only gay man she knows, and the only person with Aids she knows, despite the fact that South Africa has one of the highest infection rates in the world.

The easy thing has been to keep the effects of Aids as distant from her as possible. Questions of sex are avoided, as are questions about how I contracted it in the

first place. It's an elaborate dance, but one that has become so much easier with the latest drug treatments.

As I left hospital, in January 1994, those treatments simply bought extra time, not life. You would hope for new drugs to buy even more time. What did the nausea they caused matter if I was feeling better? Who cared if one of the drugs brought on peripheral neuropathy, a numbness in my feet caused by irreversible nerve damage? It was all in the cause of "a window of good health", as one of my friends put it.

In the early Nineties those windows closed all the time. After six months, the virus adapted to the drugs I was on. The familiar symptoms returned: fatigue, irritability, loss of appetite, weight loss. The blood tests confirmed the obvious — this most versatile of viruses had become resistant to the drugs.

It was the snappily titled protease inhibitors, named after the enzyme they attack, that gave me my life back. Six Ritonavir each dose, three Saquinavir, plus an AZT

The virus is in my blood, but it's simply biding its time

to stop the virus from getting into my brain, a 3TC because it can't do any harm, and a capsule of Septrin to stop me getting PCP again. It's a pot of lucky charms, to be taken twice a day.

Two years on, I'm part of an informal global experiment in keeping Aids victims alive. The virus is undetectable in my blood, but as far as I'm concerned it's simply hiding, biding its time.

The side-effects of the drugs are only one problem Aids patients face; no one knows the consequences of keeping this intruder at bay with potentially toxic drugs for five or ten years. This crisis is not over. This is just a lull.

But at least these days when I see my mother I can tell the truth. I no longer need to protect her against terrible realities. I can say "I am living with Aids and I'm living a full life", and mean it.

And my new dentist, the one who thinks my gums are a disgrace, doesn't insist on seeing me after all her other patients have gone. Some things are changing.

© Aids and Me, featuring Nigel Wrench, his friends, family and doctor, is broadcast on Radio 4 tomorrow at 11am.

Pete was destined to go to university. A-level time stretched his psyche to breaking point but he completed the exams and won his place. The tension, however, had been too much because he cracked before the university term started. Pete donned a helmet and leathers rather than mortar board and gown; instead of climbing the academic ladder and becoming a respectable graduate, he became a Hell's Angel.

Pete's breakdown was attributed to a form of depression. In his case, as well as

Drugs to ease the terror

depression it included drug abuse and wildly psychotic delusions and beliefs. Pete was mad, had and dangerous to know; his antisocial behaviour included a large measure of violence. He was threatening and violent to others and also self-destructive. His conversation was not reassuring. It centred almost entirely around his thoughts, and they dwelled on the bizarre — he

was preoccupied with space and the supernatural. Pete's associates may have thought that he was suffering from a depressive illness but his doctors realised that this was only part of the picture. He was also schizophrenic, and unfortunately he was prescribed old-style antipsychotic drugs. Pete rejected these; they made him so tired and leaden that even if his lack of

co-ordination and blurred vision hadn't prevented him from riding his motorbike, he wouldn't have had the energy to do so. With the blurred vision came a mouth so dry that his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. He also claimed that he couldn't think properly and that he was confused. He was lucky — he avoided the more serious side-effects of traditional antipsychotic drugs: Parkinson-type symptoms, severe agitation and muscle spasms.

Ministers, civil servants, doctors, social workers, patients' families and, not least, patients, are united in their belief that when someone with schizophrenia is taking the correct treatment, their life is often bearable. Otherwise they become the victim of unimaginable horrors. Most patients become frightened mice, terrified by their delusions. And, because of the difficulties they have in ordinary social life, they are usually self-effacing and retiring. Nonetheless, some are driven to violence by their disordered thoughts, and Pete was one.

Pete is a good example of the value of the new-style atyp-

MEDICINE CHEST

DR THOMAS STUTTAFOORD

medication which has improved his quality of life. He is taking the atypical neuroleptic Clozaril (clozapine), and he is one of 8,000 out of 250,000 schizophrenics in the UK being treated in this way. It is very effective but Pete's blood count and drug dose have to be monitored so that he doesn't become sleepy. He has increased salivation and has gained weight.

Clozapine isn't the only atypical neuroleptic. Later ones include Risperdal, also

known as risperidone, Zyprexa (olanzapine), Seroquel (quetiapine), Serolect (serindole) and Solian (amisulpride).

Dr Mike Launer, a consultant psychiatrist, is clinical director of the Burnley NHS trust. He looks after 120 patients taking clozapine and more than 200 on the other new-style neuroleptics. Each of these new drugs has its own strengths and weaknesses. His unit is a centre of excellence in dealing with patients reluctant to take old-style antipsychotic drugs.

Marjorie Wallace, of the mental health charity SANE, says that 75 per cent of a sample of psychiatrists interviewed were so rationed that they were unable to prescribe atypical neuroleptics rather than old-style antipsychotic therapy. She adds: "Getting people to take atypical neuroleptics early is the most important step in their treatment. Without providing the money, any government proposals for the future of the psychiatric services will never work."

"The only safe alternative would be to reopen, expensively, the acute beds already closed. One in seven schizophrenic patients commits suicide — this medication is life-saving."

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The image of Blair as a woman-friendly politician heading a Conservative government. So why are there so few women in his cabinet? Grace Bradberry reports

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Blair's laddish new Labour



The image of Tony Blair is of a woman-friendly politician heading a feminised party. So why are there so few women in his Cabinet? Grace Bradberry reports



Ladies' day: Tony Blair with some of the 101 female MPs voted in at the last election. Many feel it is time for Labour to stop listening to women and start acting on their behalf

Who can't recall the picture of Blair and his "laddish" friends? Here was a woman-friendly politician, heading a feminised party, who was to do wonders for the female half of the population. Women voters seem to have bought the image. The last election saw an 11 per cent swing from Conservative to Labour among female voters. For the first time in years women's support for the party (44 per cent) was almost on a par with that of men (45 per cent). In the 1992 poll women were 8 percentage points less likely to vote Labour than men, and his gap cost the party the election.

But the image is not necessarily the reality. A few dissenting voices say new Labour is not at all feminised. Diane Abbott, the maverick left-wing MP for Hackney North & Stoke Newington, was the first to suggest that the Blair mission was a "Boys Own" project.

Speaking after the last reshuffle she noted that no high-sounding Cabinet post was filled by a woman. Harriet Harman had been dismissed from Social Security and Margaret Beckett had been moved from the Department of Trade and Industry to become the Leader of the House. Then Helen Wilkinson of the think-tank Demos, writing in *New Statesman*, condemned Labour's male culture.

Even strong supporters of the Blair Government privately describe the inner circle as "laddish". Within 10's political unit, only one of Blair's political appointees is a woman (Liz Lloyd, 37, who covers agriculture, the environment and home affairs). There is also a feminist servant, Sharon White (social security). The rest are the smart young men in suits synonymous with new Labour.

Also close to Blair is Anji Hunter, his special adviser, whom he has known since school, and Sally Morgan, his political secretary. But when one thinks of new Labour's inner circle one thinks of men: Alistair Campbell, Peter Mandelson, Gordon Brown, Charlie Whelan and Jonathan Powell. Margaret McDonagh, the first female General Secretary, is certainly powerful, but her role is primarily organisational.

Then there are those who say that Labour's women MPs are not necessarily concerned with delivering for women. "They see themselves as politicians first, women second," says Helen Carey, the National Federation of Women's Institutes' representative on the Women's National Commission.

"They were elected by women for women," she insists. Actually, there's no real evidence for this.

Carey is among those who point out that Labour selling its message to women voters is quite separate from delivering women-friendly policies. "I haven't seen anything tangible coming out of this feminisation of the party," she says.

The relaunch of the Women's Unit this month seems to back this up. Baroness Jay of Paddington and Tessa Jowell, who took over from Harriet Harman and Joan Ruddock after the reshuffle, outlined 18 achievements to date. Critics note that if the unit has been so successful, why the need for a relaunch?

There was a good deal of "spin" beforehand, notably a story about Geri Halliwell and Emma Thompson being role models for teenage girls. But fresh from a photo call at a London school, where teenage girls had said they were their mothers, Lady Jay first of all suggested there had been too much spin on the issue. Then she and Jowell insisted they were building on Harriet Harman's excellent work, not changing direction. (Harman is said to have been hurt that women she deemed friends might be connected with briefings against her.) Still, the news release was headed "Government announces new priorities for women".

Then came the thorny question of feminism. Both ministers said they had been doing something else when 1970s feminism was going on. Lady Jay had been raising children. Jowell campaigning for the rights of people in mental hospitals. Certainly the former has never shown much interest in sexual politics, but Jowell is deemed rather more of a feminist.

Regarding the "no 1970s feminism" dictat she said "Well, it didn't come from us as women's minister" before reiterating "We must deliver practical policies that will make a difference to women's lives."

Strictly speaking, the Women's Unit cannot deliver policies. It has a budget of £1.5 million and just 40 civil servants; as such it is a "task force". In Lady Jay's terminology, it puts its "name tape" to policies that are then implemented by the heads of big-budget ministries — provided those heads, all men, agree. The "Better for Women, Better for All" slogan on the unit's literature is something that not only the electorate but male colleagues may have to be convinced about.

A main function of the unit is research. "Listening to Women" is a key project. But there are rumblings among women's groups that the Government has done enough listening and should start acting. When I asked Jowell why there had to be so much listening, she offered three reasons: "You constantly need to subject what the Government is doing to the reactions of those on the receiving end. It's also a way of judging the relevance and importance of new policy. But there's a third point: people value being asked their opinion and then seeing the consultation they've been part of shaping how policy is delivered." This last sounds like a PR campaign, a full-time mission to woo voters.

In fact, Tessa Jowell conducted a similar exercise in 1995 when, as Shadow Women's Minister, she toured Britain inviting members of the Women's Institute, National Council of Women and Townswomen's Guilds to social meetings — where she learnt it wasn't issues such as sexism and rape that women wanted to raise, but the burden of looking after elderly relatives and the struggle to find childcare.

Is it fair to be cynical about Labour's commitment to women? Gwyneth Dunwoody, an old Labour woman, did not support a separate Women's Unit. As an erstwhile member of the National Executive Committee, she pushed for there to be a civil servant in each department checking that legislation was woman-friendly. Jowell, Shadow Women's Minister, scrapped the plan for "sex spies".

Still, Dunwoody is enthusiastic about what is happening in Whitehall. "There has been a positive encouragement in those things that do matter most to women. Though there are still great lacunae." As the chairwoman of the Transport Select Committee she has found herself "pushing on an open door" when she talks of the problems for women of unmanned stations. "Now I could have said that until I was blue in the face to the previous transport minister."

She is less sanguine about some of the new intake of Labour women, not because a few are "quota women" (though she did oppose all-female shortlists) but because "some have still to establish themselves as individuals, and may find at the next election that having been part of a tightly disciplined group may not be to their advantage."

Melanie Johnson, MP for Welwyn Hatfield, might seem to be among this group. Meeting her at the Labour conference, I found her certainly on message: in the face of scepticism from an executive of the charity Scope, she stated her belief that Alistair Darling's intentions on social security for the disabled would be nothing but honourable, even if he had come from the Treasury.

Ms Johnson is being mentioned as a possible candidate for promotion. A former Orsted Inspector and Cambridgeshire County Councillor, she endured a nasty election campaign in which the sitting Tory, David Evans, called her "three children bastards. I wondered if, as a new Labour woman, she felt she had access to the heart of Government. "Tony has been very good at seeing people at these 10 briefings," she says. "He has 20 MPs for round-table talks. There is also a lot of access through the lobby system."

Other aspects of the lobby system are less popular with the new women. "There's a complete calmness about making decisions in the middle of the night, for which nobody bothers to adduce any sensible arguments, except we have always done it that way," says Fiona Macgarratt, MP for Slough, who was one of the first of the new intake to be promoted, becoming parliamentary private secretary to Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary.

Modernising the House is something the Labour Government had been expected to do. First it was Ann Taylor's task as Leader of the House. She is now Chief Whip, and the baton has been passed to Margaret Beckett. "I think [Beckett] has less passion for it than Ann," says Macgarratt. "But we will still make progress."

With refreshing honesty, Macgarratt admits she was a feminist in the 1970s, but adds: "I wore make-up and high heels." As for the buzz about "no 1970s feminism", she hasn't heard it but says: "What it might be saying is that there is nothing to fear. Feminism is liberating for all of humanity."

But there is nothing to fear? Though Diane Abbott thought the last reshuffle a blow for women, male backbenchers complained at the number of women given junior posts. And some of those women will presumably work their way higher up. Having expounded her belief that full opportunities for women mean better lives for all, Macgarratt understands men's anxiety: "One thing clearly demonstrated in the idea of women-only shortlists is that when women start getting their fingers on the handles of power, men have to shift their little off." For now there seems little chance of this happening at the heart of the Labour Government.

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EMU FOR BUSINESS

Feeble arguments from the boardroom

If the business leaders who put their names to yesterday's pro-EMU advertisement in the Financial Times...

The initial claim is certainly eye-catching. But is it really "the" view of British business...

So Tony Blair need not feel pressurised into joining the single currency by "business opinion"...

The arguments on the "yes" side have so far wavered between the meaningless and the misleading...

ST PETERSBURG TRAGEDY

Galina Starovoitova's murder is a small death for liberty

Boris Yeltsin's return to hospital with pneumonia has been greeted insouciantly both by the Russian media...

The assassination of this indomitable and warm-hearted woman, justly described by the President himself as the Pasionaria of Russian democracy...

Anger accompanies shock. People know that although her badly wounded aide survived and has spoken to police...

unanswered. What are the conditions for successful entry? And when, if ever, are they likely to be fulfilled?

Assertion takes the place of argument. The single currency, we are told, will be a "force for stability"...

Outside EMU, say the business people, they would have a more "exposed" currency. But sterling fluctuates less against the dollar...

Finally, the advertisers complain that, outside the single currency, Britain would have little influence over European monetary policy...

Forces are lining up on each side of the debate. This is to be welcomed. The Government's assurance that Britain would not join EMU...

championship of minority rights had made her bitter enemies on the extreme right. She had recently declared that she would run for the governorship of the Leningrad region...

The deceptive calm that Mr Primakov has managed to convey has been shattered by this event. The Prime Minister's popularity has soared since his appointment...

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Royal Court cannot afford to bicker over its title

"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches," says the book of Proverbs. And some playwrights clearly feel that, as a theatre, the Royal Court has a very good name indeed...

The arts have long been heavily dependent on patronage. Naming a gallery or theatre after its founder has become a socially desirable form of graffiti...

John Jerwood, who died in 1991, was a successful and generous pearl dealer who set up his charitable foundation almost 25 years ago to encourage and support

emerging artists. His name on a theatre neither buys advertising space nor sells products. It will not discourage commercial sponsors.

Nor is the Jerwood Foundation an opportunistic newcomer to the Royal Court. For the past two years it has been by far the largest individual sponsor of this theatre's productions...

At worst, the name of the Royal Court Theatre will be inelegant. At best, the sale of the name could secure the future of an institution which has helped to secure the future of drama...

Flaws detected in the closed-list voting system

From Mr Michael Shrimpton

Sir, Before the Government seeks any resort to the Parliament Act 1949 to ram through a closed-list voting system...

The Labour Government of the day, in trying to force through steel nationalisation in 1948-49, resorted to the desperate device of using the Parliament Act 1911 to amend that self-same Act.

It is a fundamental rule of the constitution that a delegate cannot enlarge its power at the expense of the delegating authority...

Prosecutions brought under this "Act" have since collapsed for lack of reliable evidence...

The consequences of using the "Parliament Act 1949" to hold an election would be chaotic. The procedure would be an unconstitutional farce...

I have the honour, Sir, to remain your humble and obedient servant. MICHAEL SHRIMPTON, Francis Taylor Building, Temple, EC4Y 7BY, November 23.

From the Shadow Home Secretary Sir, Baroness Jay of Paddington (letter, November 21) describes the

Resolving disputes

From Mr Graham Cunningham

Sir, You report (later editions, November 12) that the Lord Chancellor has suggested that civil trials can be halted mid-way through so that the parties can try mediation.

The suggestion is entirely to be commended, although it is not clear why litigants who have trod the increasingly bitter, expensive and at present lengthy path to litigation should suddenly see (or be told to see) the light of compromise in the middle of a trial...

The Government has apparently thought it wrong to promote an extensive national mediation system on the basis that it was not sure of the demand. Surely most people would welcome an inexpensive and quick method of resolving their disputes...

Yours faithfully, GRAHAM CUNNINGHAM, Francis Taylor Building, Temple, EC4Y 7BY, November 15.

Millennium stamps

From Air Marshal Sir John Curtis

Sir, It should come as little surprise to your correspondents that the Royal Mail's millennium stamp issue should fail to record many of this country's real achievements (letters, November 18).

This association has endeavoured over the past two years to obtain a commemorative stamp to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Berlin airlift.

Yours sincerely, JOHN CURTISS (President), British Berlin Airlift Association, Flat 7, 37 Buckingham Gate, SW1E 6PA, November 18.

battle over open and closed lists as "an arrogant show of strength by Tory hereditary peers".

In doing so Lady Jay totally ignores one of the most significant features of the parliamentary debate so far. Very few Labour backbenchers in either the Commons or the Lords can be found to speak in favour of the closed list.

The real question about this legislation was asked not by a Tory hereditary peer or even an elected Tory MP. It was put by the Labour MP for Wrexham, Dr John Marek, in the debate on November 10.

He said that although there was no majority in favour of the closed-list system in the Parliamentary Labour Party, the Government would have a large majority that night. Dr Marek went on:

I ask the House to think about that contradiction. If there is no majority in the Labour Party, but the system is such that the Whips and the Patronage Secretary can drag Members through the Lobby...

Yours faithfully, NORMAN FOWLER, House of Commons, November 23.

Masons and judges

From Mr Michael Shortall

Sir, Mr David Pannick, defending Freemasonry in the judiciary on the grounds that privacy must be protected against unjustifiable interference ("Does it matter if 247 judges are Masons?", Law, November 17; see also letters, November 2, 6, 18 and 23), draws a red herring across the logical path of the law. He avoids what I believe to be the real issue...

Yours faithfully, MICHAEL SHORTALL, Longford House, Thornford, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 6QQ, November 23.

Scots and English

From Mr Colin Murray

Sir, Mr D. M. B. Marquis, in his letter of November 19, is right to suggest that the English should be questioned on their feelings regarding continued union with Scotland.

All English adults, of whatever creed or colour, should be given the opportunity to vaunt their pride in being English, even if the Union is only a matter of months away from being split asunder.

Yours faithfully, COLIN MURRAY, 34 Dennis Cadman House, Admiral Moore Drive, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7RU, November 19.

Opera in concert

From Mr David Goodall

Sir, I share much of Richard Morrison's enthusiasm in his review of Wozzeck (Arts, November 16), and I applaud any opportunity to listen to or perform operatic masterpieces in the concert hall.

Yours faithfully, DAVID GOODALL (Member, London Symphony Orchestra), 83 Woodland Rise, N10 3UN, November 17.

New depths

From Mrs M. A. Campbell

Sir, Mr Alan McLoughlin (letter, November 19) finds that "sexy" has overtaken "die for" as the most irritatingly silly expression of the decade.

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Rewriting the Commandments

From the Provost of Derby

Sir, Your report (November 20, later editions) of the General Synod's refusal to change the full version of the Ten Commandments, as they will appear in the new eucharistic rites...

The synod accepted my argument, speaking for the Eucharistic Rites Revision Committee, that it is simply not a proper way of proceeding for churches to update Scripture.

Yours faithfully, MICHAEL FERHAM, Cathedral Office, St Michael's House, Queen Street, Derby DE1 3DT, November 20.

From Sir George Engle, QC

Sir, There are, of course, two versions of the Ten Commandments in the Bible - in Exodus xx and Deuteronomy v. In both, the tenth (against coveting) ends with the general words "or anything that belongs to your neighbour"...

Yours faithfully, GEORGE ENGLE, 32 Wood Lane, Highgate N6 5UB, November 20.

Legal discrimination?

From Mr R. E. Floyd

Sir, In recruiting Crown prosecutors, the new DPP advises: "I certainly don't want 42 white, middle-class, male lawyers like me" (report, November 16).

Yours faithfully, RICHARD FLOYD, Foxes Dale, 20 Roseacre Gardens, Chilworth, Guildford, Surrey GU4 8RQ, November 17.

Feminine angels

From Miss Prudence Raper

Sir, When did angels change sex? (letters, November 16 and 20). Certainly by the early 15th century, judging by those painted by Fra Angelico, which have almost identical girlish faces and hairstyles to those on this year's Christmas stamps.

Yours faithfully, PRUDENCE RAPER, 20 Jessica Road, Wandsworth Common, SW18 2QN, November 18.

From Mr J. M. Dyson

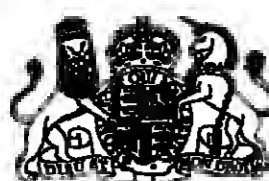
Sir, Adam, as quoted by Milton, said: O why did God, Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven With spirits masculine, create at last This novelty on earth, this fair defect Of nature, and not fill the world at once With men as angels without feminine. Or find some other way to generate Mankind?

Yours truly, J. M. DYSON, 20 Keats Grove, NW3 2RS, November 21.

From Mr T. J. B. Pallister

Sir, When I was brought up in this country (Mrs Fremelin's letter, November 20), there were three sexes: male, female and Englishmen. There was no sex in Heaven and God was English.

Yours faithfully, T. J. B. PALLISTER, The Old Vicarage, Tunstead, Norwich NR12 8HT, November 20.



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE November 23 The Duke of Edinburgh... ST JAMES'S PALACE November 23 The Prince of Wales... KENSINGTON PALACE November 23 The Duke of Gloucester... RICHMOND PALACE November 23 Princess Alexandra...



The actor Richard Wilson produces a rare smile as he climbs the Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square, London, for a topping-out ceremony to mark the completion of the structure of the rebuilt theatre. Leading article, page 19.

Today's royal engagements

The Queen, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh will open Parliament at 11.30. Princess Margaret will be present. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will give a reception...

Church news

The Rev Christopher Laffer, Rector, Trimley (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to retire February 23, 1999. The Rev David Osborne, Team Vicar, Malvern Link, Worcester (Worcester) resigned July 31. The Rev Stephen Parker, Assistant Curate, Harborne St Peter (Birmingham) resigned September 30.

Transport Research Foundation

The Transport Research Foundation is the owner of the UK's Transport Research Laboratory and has the support of eighty-three sector members including Universities, Professional Institutions, Companies, the Transport Support Industry and Trade Associations.

Dinners

Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) Mr Benedict Allen, explorer, broadcaster and presenter of the BBC television series 'The Skeleton Coast' and 'Edge of Blue Heaven' was the principal speaker at the First CIWEM Fellows Dinner held last night at the Institute of Directors, London.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Baruch Spinoza, philosopher, Amsterdam, 1632. Laurence Sterne, novelist, Clermont, Co Tipperary, 1713; Grace Darling, heroine of the Forthshire wreck, Bamburgh, Northumberland, 1815; Frances Burnett, novelist and dramatist, Manchester, 1849; Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, painter, Albi, France, 1864; Herbert Sutcliffe, England and Yorkshire cricketer, Pudsey, Yorkshire, 1894.

Musical evening

Princess Alexandra, Vice-Patron of the Royal Over-Seas League, was the guest of honour at a Royal Over-Seas League musical evening held yesterday at Kensington Palace.

Reception

Carlton Club/United & Cecil Club Mr William Hague, Leader of HM Opposition, and Mrs Hague attended this evening at the Carlton Club reception held last night at the Carlton Club.

Luncheon

Rotary Club of London Mr John Parker, Mr Anthony Newton and Mr Neville Shillman were the speakers at a luncheon of the Rotary Club of London held yesterday at the Portman Hotel.

Today's birthdays

Viscount Alanbrooke, 66; Mr Peter M. Birse, chairman, Birse Group, 55; Mr David Baker, Chief Constable, West Mercia, 55; the Marquess of Blandford, 43; Mr Ian Boham, cricketer, 43; Mr Lynn Chadwick, sculptor, 84; Mr Billy Connolly, comedian, 56; Miss Beryl Cooper, 71; Miss Vivien Saunders, golfer, 52; Mr Edward Squire, broker, 65; Mr Mark Taylor, director, Muscums Association, 40; the Right Rev F.S. Temple, former Bishop of Malmesbury, 82; Mr Paul Thornburn, rugby player, 36.

Meeting

Royal Overseas League Mr Stephen Wheatcroft, economic adviser, World Travel and Tourism Council, was the speaker at a meeting of the Discussion Group of the Royal Overseas League held last night at Over-Seas House, St James's.

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Large section containing various notices, obituaries, and personal advertisements. Includes sections for BIRTHS, DEATHS, and various individual notices.

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Vertical strip of advertisements on the right side of the page, including various notices and services.

Rodney Hobson on Business Link guidance to entrepreneurs on improving practices

Winner has gratitude of four firms he helped grow

ED BALDWIN, a member of the staff of Business Link Essex, was named the national network's top adviser in the Building Better Businesses awards. He was nominated by four of the small companies that he has helped in the past year: Seco Aluminium, an aluminium extrusions manufacturer, R&D Security Manufacturing, an installer of electronic security systems, Mr Plastic Trade Warehouse, a maker of building products, and Swans, a voluntary organisation helping people with handicaps. Mr Baldwin helped Seco to install a robot-driven material handling system covering 14,500 sq ft of floor space. At R&D Security, Mike Topping, a director, says: "He helped us to re-structure our management, administration and accounts, improving the efficiency of the business. Now we produce accurate management accounts on a monthly basis, have a more effective cost and price structure and can say we are managing the business rather than being managed by it."



Gavin Brooks, left, a Business Link adviser who helped Richard Meyrick to develop a business teaching the piano to City executives

Adviser's key role in piano venture

A PIANO teacher who set up in business giving lessons to City financial experts is among the long list of small companies that have sought advice from Business Link. Richard Meyrick, concert pianist and proprietor of The Piano Studio, nominated Gavin Brooks, of Business Link London City Partners, for the Building Better Business awards for helping him to start his business "against very considerable odds". In his own words, he is now "an international concert pianist let loose upon the rather sad pianistic endeavours of barristers, judges, bankers and stockbrokers". Mr Meyrick says: "I knew nothing of the Business Link organisation and had only the vaguest notion that perhaps there was a lot of money to be made from offering daytime piano lessons to City executives. I fully expected to be laughed out of court." The main problem turned out to be acquiring suitable premises. Several leases fell through. Mr Brooks's encouragement through all the disappointments was crucial. When premises were finally secured last March, after an eight-month search, Mr Brooks advised on lesson fees, pitching them higher than Mr Meyrick had intended. The higher prices proved realistic. Mr Meyrick says: "After three months, I nearly doubled the income I usually receive from teaching the piano at home in Kent." He originally forecast first-year profits of £20,000, but the actual turnout is likely to be £35,000.

BRIEFINGS

- Tips on how to spot the warning signs of recession and how to survive the downturn are contained in a new book *The Recession Buster's Handbook*, by Niki Chesworth, published by Kogan Page at £8.99.
- A free guide to the international mail order market has been produced by the Royal Mail. Copies from 0345 950950.
- Only one in ten small businesses is insured against the owner or a key employee being unable to work for a long period, research by Lloyd's TSB indicates. The bank has produced a booklet, *Your Business Your Future*, which gives guidance on planning for the unexpected. Free copies from 0800-056 0170, quoting reference PR3.
- Free seminars on the euro and year 2000 problems are being held at Centre Point, Central London, by the Focus training and enterprise council and Barclays Bank on Friday November 27 and on December 3. Inquiries: 0171-445 3409.
- An initiative called Virtual Business Community, aimed at encouraging companies in the West of Scotland to use e-mail and electronic commerce, has been started by Glasgow Chamber of Commerce. Dr Jim Hamill, a co-ordinator, said: "The Internet can provide a low-cost gateway to global markets... but only about 10 per cent of Scotland's 5,000 exporting smaller companies are using it."
- A technology centre set up by Aztec, the Tec for the London boroughs of Kingston, Wandsworth and Merton, will be available for renting by small businesses from January. The centre is part of an initiative started with £70,000 of government money. Details: 0181-547 3934.

Worry as smaller enterprises shun IT

SMALL businesses are still resisting warnings from the information technology industry that they risk losing sales by ignoring IT products, two new surveys show. Some firms still shun even fax machines. A BT survey covering a cross-section of 550 firms divided them into four categories: techno-sceptics, which are reluctant to invest in IT; techno-pragmatics, which adopt IT gradually and review it regularly; techno-enthusiasts, young companies that believe that IT will give them a competitive edge; and the techno-leaders, which use the latest products to improve efficiency. The study found nearly half the sceptics lacked a full set of the electronic "essentials": telephones, faxes and personal computers. Across the four categories, 69 per cent have mobile telephones, but few have the equipment to do office work on the move. Just 22 per cent have laptops, though the figure is 39 per cent in London. The view that men are more at home with the technology than women is challenged by the study. The same proportion of men and women consider themselves able to make full use of the technology. One frightening revelation was that 17 per cent believed they would still be grappling with millennium compliance in five years' time. UK companies are not alone in Europe in fighting shy of information technology, a report by Cisco Systems, the Internet networking provider, says. It claims that one in five small European companies has effectively rejected technology. Many are "still flummoxed by the fax machine and uninspired by the PC". It seems that the country where most companies have some form of computerisation is the Czech Republic. Attitudes in Britain and Germany are becoming polarised between technophiles and technophobes. A quarter of UK companies and a third of German ones have rejected technological advances, yet both countries rival the Czechs in the number of enthusiasts. Goran Strandberg, of Cisco, says: "There is a revolution going on in the business world today and, so far, many companies have failed to notice. They are missing out on major cost savings and losing opportunities for revenue generation that this technology can offer. The polarisation between small companies in Europe is quite extreme. It is remarkable that as we move into the next millennium we still have businesses in Europe that have yet to buy a PC." Ominously for businesses that can manage perfectly well without computers, it is clear from the Cisco report that large firms are putting increasing pressure on suppliers to enter the technological age. Already more than a third of client companies now demand that suppliers on their approved list must use PCs and have Internet access.



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A helping hand that notches up the points



Paul Ince scores Liverpool's first goal in their 4-2 win on Saturday. Bad news for those with an Aston Villa defender in their team. Photograph: Ben Radford/Allsport

An inquiry has been received from Mr Ian Hart, a Worthing undertaker, who complains in the Sussex Riviera Super League. Why, he wishes to know, was Darren Huckerby not credited with an assist in Coventry City's 3-0 win over Everton on Sunday, November 15?

The incident Mr Hart was referring to came in the 89th minute. A shot by Huckerby was blocked by defender David Unsworth. Noel Whelan, following up, slammed the ball into the net.

The answer, unfortunately for Mr Hart and any others who hoped they had spotted an error, is that no assist is given if the last touch before the scorer comes from an opponent, and the touch significantly alters the speed and direction of the ball.

Before Unsworth's interception, the ball was speeding diagonally towards the far post; after it, the ball was rolling invitingly towards the incoming Whelan.

It may be worth another look at the assist, and what does, and does not, constitute one. The most

straightforward form of assist is the final pass before a goal is scored.

This can either be from a dead ball — such as Bobby Moore's freekick into the head of Geoff Hurst for England's first goal in the 1966 World Cup final — or in free play:

for example, Alan Ball's cross collected and knocked in via the underside of the crossbar by Hurst for his second in the same match. And yes, it was a goal, for the simple reason that the referee said so. However, there are other assists which are less obvious. A player

who is fouled when a penalty-kick is awarded receives an assist if the kick is converted — unless he takes it himself, in which case the three points for the goal are reward enough.

If a player takes a corner-kick and the ball is touched on to the scorer without any significant change in speed or direction, both the corner taker and the player who touched it on receive assists.

On Saturday, Michael Hughes of Wimbledon crossed the ball into the Arsenal penalty area, it hit Robbie Earle's arm (to put it charitably) and Efan Ekoku scored. The assist goes not to Hughes, but to Earle. A significant change of speed and direction, as the Arsenal defenders would certainly agree.

If you are looking for a player who attracts strong tackles in the penalty area and is a good crosser of the ball, then David Ginola is worth considering (see article by Matt Sims, opposite page). "I think he can get more goals himself and more assists," says who? A certain George Graham. **Hotline: 01582 702720.**



Bosnich: missed defeat

Dodd: clean sheet

Campbell: in the points

Alexandersson: 6 points

Fowler: doubled score

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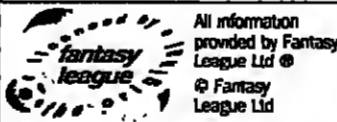
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Table with columns for player code, name, club, weekly points, and total points. Lists various full-backs and centre-backs.

Table with columns for player code, name, club, weekly points, and total points. Lists various centre-backs.

Table with columns for player code, name, club, weekly points, and total points. Lists various forwards.

Table with columns for player code, name, club, weekly points, and total points. Lists various midfielders.



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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 24 1998

Siebe swallows ailing BTR in £9bn merger



Unveiling the new BTR Siebe yesterday: Ian Strachan, deputy chairman, Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge, chairman, and Allen Yurko, chief executive

**By CARL MORTSHED
INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS EDITOR**

BTR, the struggling engineering group that was once Britain's most feared conglomerate, has succumbed to a £9 billion merger proposal from Siebe.

The deal was hailed by Allen Yurko, Siebe's chief executive, as an opportunity to create a global leader in controls and automation with more than 10 per cent of the world market. It will end the desperate attempt by Ian Strachan, BTR's chief executive, to reverse years of deteriorating share price performance.

The merger will give BTR shareholders just 45 per cent of the enlarged group, but it sparked a 30 per cent rise in

the BTR share price as the market speculated that Siebe was picking up assets cheaply. BTR shares rose 38p to 133p while Siebe rose 28p to 243p.

Some 5,000 jobs will be lost in the process of stitching together the two groups, with annual savings of £250 million forecast by 2002. Most of the jobs will go in sales and administration, with BTR's head office likely to feel the heat. About a fifth of job losses will be in the UK.

City analysts were shocked by the speed at which the deal was agreed and speculated that rivals in the control and automation business, such as Emerson, GE, ABB or Siemens, might still mount a competing offer.

Others questioned whether a rival would risk mounting a

bid with a huge goodwill premium and pointed to a fall in Siebe's rating post-merger. "The quantity of earnings is up, but what you have to balance is the quality," one said.

Investment bankers for the two companies confirmed that the first approach to BTR from Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge, Siebe's chairman, came only a fortnight ago. It followed weak results from both BTR and Siebe, which warned of effects of the Asian recession on its markets.

Mr Strachan said that both groups stood to gain from the deal. He said that BTR had components, rather than systems, and was unable to buy the systems businesses it needed at attractive prices. He said: "The issue for Siebe is it lacked scale and was unable to

provide total solutions to customers."

Mr Yurko refused to speculate on what might happen to BTR's automotive division, the weak link in BTR's business and the odd one out in Siebe's control and automation strategy. He said: "We need to return automotive to health."

Sir Owen Green, BTR's former chairman and architect of its 1980s takeover drive, described the deal as an acquisition and said: "The company had got down to its nadir."

The City took the hint yesterday that Siebe was driving a takeover. The new group, BTR Siebe, will retain Lord Marshall, Siebe's chairman, and Mr Yurko will keep his job as chief executive, as will James Mueller, Siebe's chief operating officer. Mr Strachan will

be deputy chairman and will co-head integration of the groups. Kathleen O'Donovan, BTR's finance director, is taking that role in BTR Siebe.

Siebe chose a merger by a scheme of arrangement, rather than a simple takeover, to avoid creating billions of pounds of goodwill that would have to be amortised over 20 years, depressing profits. According to bankers, this method explains the board composition. Under merger accounting, a new board must reflect both sides' managements.

The new BTR Siebe will have sales of almost £9 billion. It will pay a pro forma dividend for the year to March 1999 of 7p.

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Predator to prey, page 31

Deutsche plans \$8bn takeover of Bankers

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

DEUTSCHE BANK yesterday announced its intention to take over Bankers Trust for \$8.6 billion (£2.2 billion) to create the world's biggest financial services group.

Unusually for a transaction of this size, Deutsche released the price tag — \$93 per share, a 20 per cent premium — but delayed a formal launch of the deal.

According to a statement, the two companies have completed due diligence investigations but have yet to agree on the final structure of the new group. Its combined assets will total \$850 billion, more than Citigroup, currently the world's top finance house.

The merger is certain to result in redundancies in London, where both banks have subsidiaries. Bankers Trust employs 2,400 in the City, while Deutsche Bank, which owns the former Morgan Grenfell, employs 6,000.

Rolf Breuer, Deutsche's chairman, said: "The proposed combination would create a truly compelling global financial services company. We are working diligently to finalise all terms and preparations for the Sunday meeting of our supervisory board. We have scheduled high-level meetings with regulators in New York and Washington this week."

Frank Newman, the Bankers Trust chairman, said: "Our management teams are working together actively and meetings between our senior managements are proceeding as we work to finalise the details of our proposed combination."

The news ignited trading in banking shares on Wall Street. Bankers Trust shares shot up from \$77 to \$87. Other likely takeover candidates also saw lively buying. JP Morgan,

Donaldson Lufkin Jenrette and Lehman Brothers each rose about 10 per cent.

Bankers Trust's independence was recently undermined by its involvement in the \$3.6 billion bailout of Long Term Capital Management in September. The bank subsequently reported that it had a \$875 million exposure in speculative hedge funds. In the third quarter of this year, Bankers Trust lost \$488 million, more than analysts had anticipated.

With this acquisition, Deutsche fulfils its "American Dream" of being one of the top ten Wall Street finance houses. The German bank already has a New York base which will be integrated into Bankers Trust, America's eighth-biggest bank.

It is Deutsche's strategy to challenge the top Wall Street houses in America to pick up the clients needed to defend business in Germany. Deutsche Bank was seen as the big loser in the flotation of Deutsche Telecom two years ago. Germany's biggest to date, which was masterminded by Goldman Sachs.

Ian McEwen, banking analyst at Lehman Brothers, said: "They are seeing very strong competition within Germany. Their lunch is being eaten by Goldman Sachs."

Kleinwort Benson, owned by Dresdner Bank, the second-biggest German bank, may eventually be affected as well. The Deutsche deal is certain to put pressure on Dresdner to follow suit.

Bernhard Walter, the head of Dresdner's management board, said that a big merger was a "very clear option" for his bank. A spokesman said: "It must be a strategic fit and above all come at the proper price."

BUSINESS TODAY

| STOCK MARKET INDICES | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| FTSE 100 | 5048.4 (+130.9) |
| Yield | 4.9% |
| FTSE All Share | 2664.00 (+52.05) |
| Nikkei | Closed |
| New York | |
| Dow Jones | 9319.69 (+180.14)* |
| S&P Composite | 1183.19 (+19.64)* |
| US RATE | |
| Federal Funds | 4.75% (4.75%) |
| Long bond | 100.4 (100.4) |
| Yield | 5.25% (5.25%) |
| LONDON MONEY | |
| 3-month interbank | 6.75% (6.75%) |
| 3-month bill | 116.10 (116.91) |
| 3-month bill | 116.10 (116.91) |
| STERLING | |
| New York | 1.6640 (1.6575) |
| London | 1.6528 (1.6566) |
| DM | 2.8159 (2.7975) |
| FF | 9.4471 (9.3804) |
| Yen | 120.50 (120.40) |
| S index | 107.1 (106.5) |
| Tokyo close Yen Closed | |
| Brent 15-day (Feb) | \$11.20 (\$11.95) |
| GOLD | |
| London close | \$296.35 (\$296.35) |

Fall in house prices recorded

HOUSE prices fell for the first time in three years in the first three months to the end of October, according to a survey published yesterday by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

The survey found that only 10 per cent of chartered surveyors reported an increase in prices in England and Wales with 20 per cent reporting slight falls, and 58 per cent saying prices were stable.

Ian Perry, housing market spokesman, said that base rate cuts would have little immediate impact.

Recession warning, page 28

Bonn to fight for duty-free

GERMANY'S new Government appears ready to join the fight to retain duty-free within the European Union (Matthew Barbour writes).

Oskar Lafontaine, the Finance Minister, is to contact finance ministers in other member states to canvass support ahead of the German presidency of the EU, which begins on January 1.

The policy was set out in a letter from the office of the German Chancellor to the German Duty-Free Association. The letter states: "In spite of the hurdles of European law, the German Government intends to strongly support retention."

Duty-free trade within the EU is due to cease on June 30, 1999.

Commentary, page 29

Yardley brands sold to Germany's Wella

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

THE brand name of Yardley, the royal perfumer, has fallen into German hands, having been sold to Wella, the hair care and cosmetics group.

The deal, for an undisclosed sum, includes the rights to some of Yardley's most famous soaps and eau de colognes, including Lily of the Valley, English Fine Cologne, Yardley English Lavender and Sandalwood.

Yardley, which holds three royal warrants and is the most quintessentially English of perfumers, collapsed into receivership in August. It has been sold to Cosmopolitan Cosmetics, a subsidiary of Wella.

The receiver, Tony Thompson of KPMG, said "The brands will now receive the investment they warrant."

No jobs are involved in the



Rights to Yardley's famous cologne have gone to Wella

tributed one quarter of the company's sales. Other Yardley fragrance brands, such as Tweed and Panache, remain unsold.

Mr Thompson said "These brands are less attractive and we are aiming to create a package of them for sale, but it will take a little longer."

Yardley's international cosmetics and fragrances business, which has a factory in Basildon, Essex, is continuing to trade and turnover is currently exceeding budget.

Unsecured debtors of Yardley, which was founded 228 years ago, have been told that there will be no funds to repay them. The secured debts amount to £126 million.

A spokesman for Cosmopolitan Cosmetics said it would set up a UK subsidiary called Yardley of London to handle its newly acquired business.

Price claim attacked by Dixons

SIR STANLEY KALMS, chairman of Dixons, yesterday described suggestions that the retailer is overcharging for personal computers as an "absurdity" and said that he would welcome an Office of Fair Trading inquiry as an opportunity to prove his case (Sarah Cunningham writes).

The OFT yesterday said that it is to look into the personal computer retail market after Peter Mandelson, Trade and Industry Secretary, expressed concern about prices charged by Dixons, which also owns PC World and Currys.

An OFT spokesman said that it had not yet decided what level of inquiry to hold.

The chief executive of Intel, the computer chip maker, last week accused Dixons of "ridiculous margins" on PCs.

Pension funds act on corporate governance

By KIMBERLY McDONALD

TWO of the largest institutional investors in the US and UK yesterday said they were joining forces to keep a closer eye on corporate boardrooms.

Hermes, which manages the UK's biggest single pension fund and already is at the head of Britain's shareholder activist movement, announced an alliance with CalPERS, the largest US pension fund, designed to pool resources and improve company performance and share prices. CalPERS is well known for its record in targeting companies that fail to meet its corporate governance standards, with the likes of Apple and EDS having suffered the pension fund's wrath.

The move reflects the importance of international investing for institutions who are

now pressing for consistent standards across the world's main stock markets. A spokesman for CalPERS said that if the venture was successful other investors around the world could be invited to join the alliance.

CalPERS, which has \$139 billion (£83 billion) under management boosted its international investments from 12 per cent of total assets to 20 per cent over the past three years. Its current UK investments are valued at \$5.9 billion and it also maintains significant holdings in France, Germany and Japan.

Under the plan, Hermes will represent CalPERS when voting on UK company issues and vice versa, though there are provisions for dissenting opinions. The groups will also

work jointly over issues such as executive pay and pre-emption rights.

"Stiffer corporate governance initiatives are on the way. The Americans are much more aggressive and much less patient," said Sarah Wilson, director of Manifest, a corporate governance consultancy.

Analysts expect the debates over corporate governance rules in the UK and beyond to remain a hot topic internationally.

Peter Mandelson, the Trade Secretary, has called senior institutional investors to a meeting next month to discuss the role of the investment industry in promoting competitiveness and corporate governance.

Commentary, page 29

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Forecasters team up on recession warning

BY JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS EDITOR

BRITAIN is flirting dangerously with recession and needs more rate cuts as a matter of urgency, according to the latest forecast from the London Business School and Oxford Economic Forecasting, which are pooling their resources for the first time.

On balance, the two forecasting institutions expect Britain to escape recession next year with growth predicted of 0.9 per cent. This is in line with the Bank of England's assessment and just below the bottom end of the range offered by the Chancellor in his pre-Budget report.

They said that it was difficult to argue that inflation was a present danger and said that there was no reason

why interest rates should not be cut to well below 5.25 per cent, the trough of the last economic cycle.

"Further decisive action will be needed over the winter to avoid recession—a repeat of the dithering about policy much as happened when rates were rising would be disastrous given the fragile state of consumer and business confidence now," they said.

The report said that, to an extent, if Britain was heading for a sharp slowdown, the die had already been cast. Its econometric models suggest that neither a 1 per cent cut in base rates nor a 2p cut in income tax would add more than 0.5 per cent to growth next year.

However, they said that, to the extent that the risk of recession was aggravated by actions taken by house-

holds and companies that had lost confidence because they thought a recession was coming, a decisive policy response may have a disproportionately large effect on demand.

"At the moment, it is the abysmal state of domestic confidence, rather than any of the fundamentals, that poses the main threat of recession, and here policymakers could have a dramatic impact," the report said.

The two forecasters' current central case suggests that Britain will avoid recession, but they said: "The list of things that could trigger an outright recession next year is worryingly long."

The report cited, among other issues, the possibility that the world economy could be significantly weaker than currently expected and that

the extent to which Asian producers could displace domestic producers from home and third markets is currently being underestimated.

Oxford and the LBS are currently expecting world growth in gross domestic product of 1.7 per cent in 1999, a halving from 3.5 per cent in 1997. They said that the main risks to growth came from domestic demand in Japan and from America rather than any of the emerging markets.

They noted that, ironically, the situation in Asia had begun to stabilise. Although much of the region was still in deep recession, currencies had recovered somewhat and there were signs that industrial production may soon bottom out as exports recover.

The most serious risks to growth in America and Europe would come,

they said, not from weaker trade but from the negative effects on liquidity and investment and this was being tackled by the US Federal Reserve's willingness to cut interest rates.

A separate report published yesterday by NTC Research suggested that the risks of recession are rising. NTC's Leading Indicator—designed to indicate turning points in activity a year in advance—fell further below its long-term trend level of 100 in October to 99.6. This is the lowest value recorded since February, 1991.

NTC said that the indicator had fallen steadily during 1997, predicting the current slowdown. That slide has accelerated during the third quarter of this year, suggesting that economic conditions will worsen, possibly to the point of recession, in 1999.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Allen suffers £1m hit from contract errors

ALLEN, the construction company, yesterday revealed that management blunders had cost the group about £1 million in operating profits. Errors in tenders submitted at the end of last year had meant that margins on some contracts were considerably reduced, a fact that only came to light as the work progressed this year. Donald Greenlough, the chairman, said that "heads have rolled" and that the mistakes were due to failures of management rather than company policy.

Pre-tax profits for the six months to September 27 still showed an increase from £7.1 million to £8.9 million, on turnover up more than 30 per cent to £66.6 million from £126.8 million. Earnings rose to 15.01p a share from 12.29p. The interim dividend rises to 5.1p to 4.38p. The company said that it expected "an excellent result for the full year" but gave warning that in 1999 "the economy will slow down and this must have an adverse affect on our industry".

Tempus, page 30

Southnews advances

SOUTHNEWS, the publisher of local newspapers in London, gave warning that it expects a downturn in recruitment in its next financial year. Recruitment advertising grew by 22 per cent in the six months to October 3 and contributed 26 per cent to turnover. This helped Southnews to an 85 per cent rise in underlying pre-tax profits to £6.8 million, from £3.7 million last time. The interim dividend is up by 33 per cent, to 4p. The shares rose 12p to 368½p.

Alert hurts Servomex

SHARES in Servomex yesterday had their biggest one-day fall as the struggling gas instrument producer issued its third profit warning this year. The shares, at a 372½p high in March, fell 58½p to 99p. Servomex said that profits for the year to December 31 will be "substantially lower" than last year's £2.95 million. It blamed a reduced order intake for weak sales in the second half's first four months, but said it expects an imbalance between inquiries and orders to be reversed.

TBI passengers rise

TBI, the regional airports and property group, reported a rise in pre-tax profits to £17.3 million, from £14.1 million, in the half year to September 30 on turnover up to £60.9 million, from £45.9 million. Its airports at Cardiff, Belfast and Orlando, Florida, saw passenger flow rise 12 per cent, contributing to an airports operating profit up 16 per cent, to £17.6 million. TBI added a fourth airport in July, with a 90.1 per cent stake in Stockholm Stavsta. The interim dividend remains at 0.5p.

Hewetson interims up

HEWETSON, which provides goods and services to the construction industry, reported interim pre-tax profits up 40 per cent to £2.63 million. The company said demand and performance remained good in its flooring and timber products divisions. Demand for the group's cement-based products, however, continued to disappoint. Turnover was £32.69 million, against £35.79 million. Earnings per share were 10.90p, against 8.47p. The interim dividend is lifted to 2.75p (2.25p).

Goldshield shop plan

GOLDSHIELD GROUP, the pharmaceutical company floated in June, is planning to open its own shops and take franchises in pharmacies. Almost all of its business is by mail order. The company said it was looking at sites with a view to opening between one and four stores in London in the next 12 to 18 months. Goldshield reported pre-tax profit up 29 per cent to £2.1 million, and turnover 46 per cent higher at £15.9 million. Earnings per share were 4.1p (3.7p). The interim dividend is 0.46p.

Ferraris grows 22%

FERRARIS GROUP, which manufactures and distributes medical equipment and precision components, reported pre-tax profits up 22 per cent to £2.11 million for the year to August 31. Ferraris said that export markets continued to grow "despite concerns of global recession and reduction in world trading". Turnover jumped 34 per cent to a record £27.65 million while earnings per share were 13.1p (11.4p). The final dividend is 2.2p (2p), making a total of 3.6p (3.2p).

LIBERfabrica steady

LIBERfabrica, the book manufacturer, said it was encouraged by its largely unchanged interim results during a period of "tougher trading conditions". Sir James Hann, chairman, said: "It will take some time for UK manufacturers to re-establish their position." Pre-tax profit was £3.01 million (£3.05 million) for the six months to September 30. Turnover was £36.6 million (£34 million). Earnings per share were unchanged at 1.04p, and a dividend of 0.21p (0.19p) was declared.

News Corp unveils European subsidiary

BY RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

THE News Corporation yesterday announced its most serious attempt to tackle the continental European media market by setting up a new subsidiary, News Corp Europe.

The executive chairman of the venture, which will have headquarters in Milan, is Letizia Moratti, former chairman of RAI, the Italian national broadcaster. She will also join the board of News Corp and BSkyB in the UK.

The new company will be



Lot of bottle: Tim How, chief executive, who admitted a successful December was crucial

Majestic looks at festive promotions to boost sales

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

MAJESTIC WINE, the drinks retailer, is counting on a series of pre-Christmas promotions to propel its sales through the festive season.

Current like-for-like sales are up 4.7 per cent on the same time last year. In the six months to September 30 same-store sales were just 0.5 per cent ahead. Tim How, chief executive, said sales had begun to pick up in mid-September and have remained robust since.

"It is hard to say how much was due to the poor weather, and how much was due to the economy," Mr How said. "Obviously December is a crucial month and we shall have to see how it goes."

The company is running promotions of Australian wine, Burgundy and Bordeaux in the weeks running up to Christmas.

Pre-tax profits in the first half rose from £1.03 million to £1.04 million. Fully diluted earnings per share rose from 4.98p to 5p and the company will pay an interim dividend of 1.7p (1.6p).

RM eyes schools initiative

BY MATTHEW BARBOUR

RM, the supplier of information technology software and systems to colleges and schools, expects to gain about 30 per cent of new government spending on the National Grid for Learning (NGL) initiative.

The Government is spending an extra £100 million on the NGL, this financial year, £105 million next year and £450 million over the following two years. RM said that about 60 per cent of this will go into the market in which it operates and that it can win half of it. The Government intends that by 2002, Britain's 32,000 schools will all have modern computers and Internet access.

RM yesterday unveiled full-year pre-tax profits up to £10 million, from £8 million, on turnover up to £131 million (£110.2 million). A 1.5p final dividend makes 2.34p (1.9p). Fully diluted earnings per share were 7.9p (6.2p). The shares fell 1p to 379p.

Investors return to fray

INVESTORS poured their money back into investment funds last month encouraged by the worldwide recovery in stocks and shares (Gavin Lumsden writes).

The Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds reported that total net sales of unit trusts and tax-free Peps quadrupled to £604.4 million in October, as investors stopped selling and started to hunt for bargains.

Institutional investors pumped £241 million into unit trusts, compared with the £180 million they withdrew from the sector in September. Private investors increased their net investment by nearly 10 per cent to £363.4 million, although this was nearly £150 million less than a year ago.

Cendant chiefs' windfall

EXECUTIVES of Cendant, the US service group awaiting official clearance to acquire the RAC breakdown service, have a \$160 million (£96 million) windfall after revelation of stock options (Oliver August writes).

The main beneficiary is Henry Silverman, the chairman, who earlier this year presided over a 70 per cent slide in the price of shares in Cendant, hit by accounting irregularities. In summer, after details of the irregularities had been unearthed and implicated managers had resigned, remaining executives complained their options had become worthless.

Cendant's compensation committee agreed to revalue options to prevent executives from leaving. A third of Mr Silverman's options were priced to market and a third were priced at twice the market rate. The rest were cancelled.

Cendant shares have since risen 50 per cent, leading some shareholders to question the timing. One fund manager, however, said the executives were just lucky. Mr Silverman is thought to be entitled to options worth \$45 million.

TOURIST RATES

| | Bank | Bank | Bank | Bank | |
|--------------|--------|--------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| | Buy | Sell | Buy | Sell | |
| Australia \$ | 2.67 | 2.49 | Japan Yen | 215.50 | 197.97 |
| Austria Sch | 23.88 | 18.20 | Malta | 0.654 | 0.655 |
| Belgium Fr | 61.40 | 56.34 | Netherlands Gld | 3.973 | 3.078 |
| Canada \$ | 2.678 | 2.590 | New Zealand \$ | 3.24 | 3.00 |
| Cyprus Cyp | 0.8773 | 0.9205 | Norway Kr | 12.99 | 12.05 |
| Denmark Kr | 11.32 | 10.43 | Portugal Esc | 302.27 | 280.24 |
| Egypt | 5.83 | 5.22 | S Africa R | 10.03 | 9.07 |
| Finland Mk | 9.13 | 8.38 | Spain Ptas | 261.63 | 225.54 |
| France Fr | 9.54 | 9.16 | Sweden Kr | 14.23 | 13.13 |
| Germany Dm | 2.986 | 2.724 | Switzerland Fr | 5.481 | 2.553 |
| Greece Dr | 499 | 460 | Turkey Lira | 59824 | 47924 |
| Hong Kong \$ | 13.62 | 12.42 | USA \$ | 1.759 | 1.616 |
| India | 129 | 109 | | | |
| Indonesia | 16204 | 11204 | | | |
| Ireland P | 1.2895 | 1.2098 | | | |
| Israel S | 7.28 | 6.59 | | | |
| Italy Lira | 2970 | 2733 | | | |

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THE TIMES

Netscape merger to America

Nationwide ben now as profits r

£10 ON THE TIME AS OF THE WORL

CHANGING TIME

Flip-charting BTR's transition

COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Ian Strachan is a whizz with the flip charts. Since he took over as chief executive in January 1996, he has detailed his strategy for the business to just about anyone who would listen and, as he talked, the BTR share price slid inexorably downwards. But Mr Strachan was undeterred. In the most recent annual report, he told BTR's impoverished shareholders that success was in his sights. "I am confident that we will have completed the transition from a highly diversified conglomerate to a leading global engineering company by the end of 1998," he wrote.

Voilà, the transition is set to be accomplished, although the formalities may mean that completion is just a couple of months behind his schedule. But what the flip charts did not show was the route to salvation, which sees BTR succumbing to a share price that dreadfully undervalues its underlying assets. Siebe's Allen Yurko will have the chance to extract from BTR the returns that Mr Strachan failed to deliver.

The market's view is that he will be able to do just that. Mr Yurko is a man who, if not in meetings in the City, likes to get inside his businesses. "You'll find him with dirt under his fingernails," said a colleague. "The impeccably coiffured Mr Strachan is more at home with his flow charts than production lines.

This may have explained why the part of his strategy that was best executed was the disposals of businesses, transactions that could be carried out in the relative comfort of banking offices around the world. Mr Strachan achieved fair prices for the companies he sold but he was struggling over the other half of the equation: improving the profitability of what was left.

Profits this year are likely to come out at about half the level of 1993, the year that Sir Owen Green gave up the chairmanship. The man who built up BTR remains a shareholder and yesterday he broke his silence over the company's fading fortunes. "I can't understand why everyone has been so patient," he said.

But the City wanted to believe that Ian Strachan could pull off the strategy that he related so convincingly. Yet the company's sinking share price made it increasingly difficult for him to attract the executives he needed to make it work. The City's patience was expiring and yesterday's merger is a neat solution. Siebe, too, has been finding the going tougher of late. The businesses fit

together with reassuring neatness and should genuinely be stronger to play in their global marketplace.

Ian Strachan will oversee the integration but few expect him to stay around for long. But there will be companies in need of a man with a flip chart and a fine line in strategy. All he needs is a strong chief executive.

Hermes looks more promising. The long-time manager of BT and Post Office pension funds has a similar investment focus. It likes to track indices rather than choose all its investments, but not to be a passive investor.

For a quarter of a century Hermes has also put its car in on corporate governance matters. Alistair Ross Goobey is a man of firm views and, led by him, Hermes has, unusually, been prepared to campaign in public, as in its drive to stop over-long rolling directors' contracts.

The new alliance is focused on boardroom manners rather than prodding underperforming managers, which has helped CalPERS to improve returns on its duller US holdings. Even here, however, demands for better etiquette will not be one way.

UK institutional investors with holdings in American equities are fed up with some of the practices

used to guarantee that US executives get rich — and equally powerless to do anything about them.

One of the least desirable recent imports is the idea of rebasing prices of share options to bail directors out if the share price goes down. There was an unseemly rush to protect directors here as soon as shares started their August slide. Only the October recovery seems to have stemmed a tide of abuse.

In America, CalPERS went so far as to lead a class action against directors of Centiant in the summer over some of the nastier financial irregularities that rocked its share price. But the year-gaunting Californians appear powerless to stop Centiant directors making a pile out of rebased share options.

Evidently, the deal between CalPERS and Hermes is meant to be the start of a worldwide trade union of institutional investors.

But do not expect results fast, even in Anglo-Saxon countries. In the mid 1990s the Association of British Insurers became an enthusiastic founder member of a new international corporate governance network including active US funds. Little has been heard of its triumphs.

Listening out for a swansong at EMI

The rumours are hovering over EMI with the intensity of a flock of vultures. Like the beady-eyed birds, the gossips have spotted something vulnerable to attack.

Shareholders in EMI may be wondering just who will be there to protect them should the aggressors decide to act. Chairman Sir Colin Southgate is not best placed to lead the company to safety at the moment. Some were concerned that he should think it possible to combine running an ailing FTSE company with sorting out the problems of the Royal Opera House. Even Sir Colin might now be prepared to agree. Life with the luvvies is proving

worse than any dramatist could have portrayed and Sir Colin is said to have threatened resignation on several occasions. Such is his grip on the disastrous affairs of the ROH that the withdrawals of the threats are not greeted with universal applause and calls for curtain calls.

As those who have preceded him know, one of the difficulties at the Opera House is for the nominal boss to fend off the luminaries who believe themselves to have the right to run things. Strong, verging on ruthless, tactics are required. Given the profit warnings and share price, EMI might benefit from a similar determination at the top. Sir Colin, who was leaving, then staying, is not in the position to provide it.

Duty-bound

IT SEEMS that Gerhard Schröder is determined to use Germany's presidency of the EU to campaign for an extension of the current duty-free regime. His motive is to preserve jobs, a driving principle of the new left-leaning Europe. However, while Mario Monti, the EU Competition Commissioner, claims to be unimpressed by the argument, he may yet have to succumb for the purely practical reason that the Brussels brains have still to dream up any remotely workable way of replacing the system.

Netscape in \$4bn merger talks with America Online

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

NETSCAPE and America Online yesterday confirmed they were negotiating the first megamerger between Internet companies.

America Online will pay around \$4 billion (£2.4 billion), a price that does not include a premium since Netscape's share price increased nearly 50 per cent last week.

The combined group will be a major competitor to Microsoft on the Internet where the embattled software giant is trying to win dominance.

Microsoft was quick to use the speculation surrounding the negotiations to its advantage in the antitrust trial that currently occupies the group.

William Neukom, the Microsoft lawyer, said: "This proposed deal shows that the Government's case against Microsoft was and is unnecessary. Microsoft's competitors have always had the resources to reshape the competitive landscape, and do so overnight."

Netscape and America Online have insisted that no deal

has been struck yet. The anticipated transaction will take the form of a stock swap.

Netscape's founders, who became famous for the instant wealth they created for themselves when floating their company three years ago, will find it easier to cash in their paper fortunes after the merger.

Marc Andreessen, one of the founders, owns Netscape shares worth \$500 million. Another major beneficiary of the deal would be Prince al-Waleed bin Talal, the Saudi investor, who owns a 5 per cent stake.

Salvesen to spend £100m

CHRISTIAN SALVESEN, the distribution group, has £100 million to spend on expansion and maintains acquisitive ambitions, despite its decision yesterday to hold the interim dividend at 2.45p (Robert Cole writes).

Edward Roderick, chief executive, said that the group's caution on the dividend reflected uncertainty about the health of the UK economy.

Half-year pre-tax profits were £19.6 million, well down on the £47.6 mil-

lion earned in the first half of last year. However, Salvesen split off its engineering services side as a newly quoted firm called Aggreko in September 1997. Salvesen said that if the numbers are restated to reflect the demerger, its pre-tax profits would have risen 1.5 per cent from £19.3 million.

Analysts expect Salvesen to make about £38 million before tax for the year to next March.

Tempus, page 30

MacLaurin 'not for M&S'

LORD MACLAURIN of Knebworth, the former chairman of Tesco, has been approached by a headhunter about replacing Sir Richard Greenbury as chairman of Marks & Spencer (Sarah Cunningham writes). However, yesterday Lord MacLaurin said he was not interested in the job.

Lord MacLaurin, who now chairs the England and Wales Cricket Board and Vodafone, said yesterday that he had not had any direct approaches

from M&S, and had told the headhunter that he "would not consider" moving to the company. "I could not look my former colleagues at Tesco in the eye if I were to go to a rival retailer," he said.

Marks & Spencer would not comment on whether it has hired any headhunters to look for senior executives. But at least two firms have been phoning retailers, asking them if they would be interested in a senior position at the company.

Nationwide benefit vow as profits rise

THE Nationwide Building Society lifted pre-tax profits 20 per cent, to £212.7 million, in the half year to October 4 (Caroline Merrell writes).

Brian Davis, the chief executive, said: "These interim results, the first we have produced for a number of years, prove that we are continuing to honour our commitment to deliver real value to members."

The society said that it planned to hand back some more of its profits to members as mutual benefits. This year, it has returned about £150 million to them in lower mortgage rates and higher deposit rates.

The society now has net new mortgage share of 11.6 per cent. Savers' balances are up by 8.6 per cent, to £35.9 billion.

Channel chairman facing revolt

BY MATTHEW BARBOUR

A FORMER chief executive of Channel Holdings, the troubled electronic security group, is urging shareholders to vote its chairman, Philip Ling, off the board at its annual meeting tomorrow.

Patrick Rogers, chief executive of the group between 1992 and 1996, said that "under Mr Ling's chairmanship the share-price has been reduced close to rubble". He blames "a lack of strategic direction", "serious errors of judgment", "a split management team" and "the destruction of the board's stock market credibility by a series of statements from the chairman which have quickly proved to be grossly optimistic or, in certain cases, were just plain wrong or misleading".

Since floating at the end of 1995, shares in Channel have fallen from a high of 38p to a low of 54p. Last month the value of the company was reduced by a further 12 per cent after it issued a profits warning for the full year.

Mr Ling was yesterday out of the country and unavailable for comment. However, Stewart Evans, chief executive at Channel since August, said the board will be unanimously backing Mr Ling's re-election.

Mr Rogers, who was ousted as chief executive in August 1996 after what he describes as a "boardroom power struggle", said: "Shareholders' interests would be best served by the ousting of Mr Ling and the appointment of a new chairman able to restore credibility to the company."

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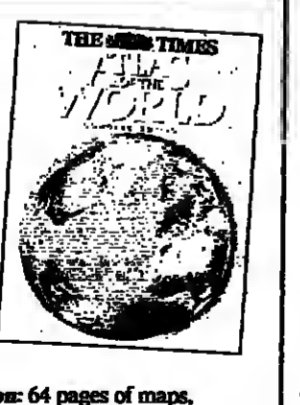
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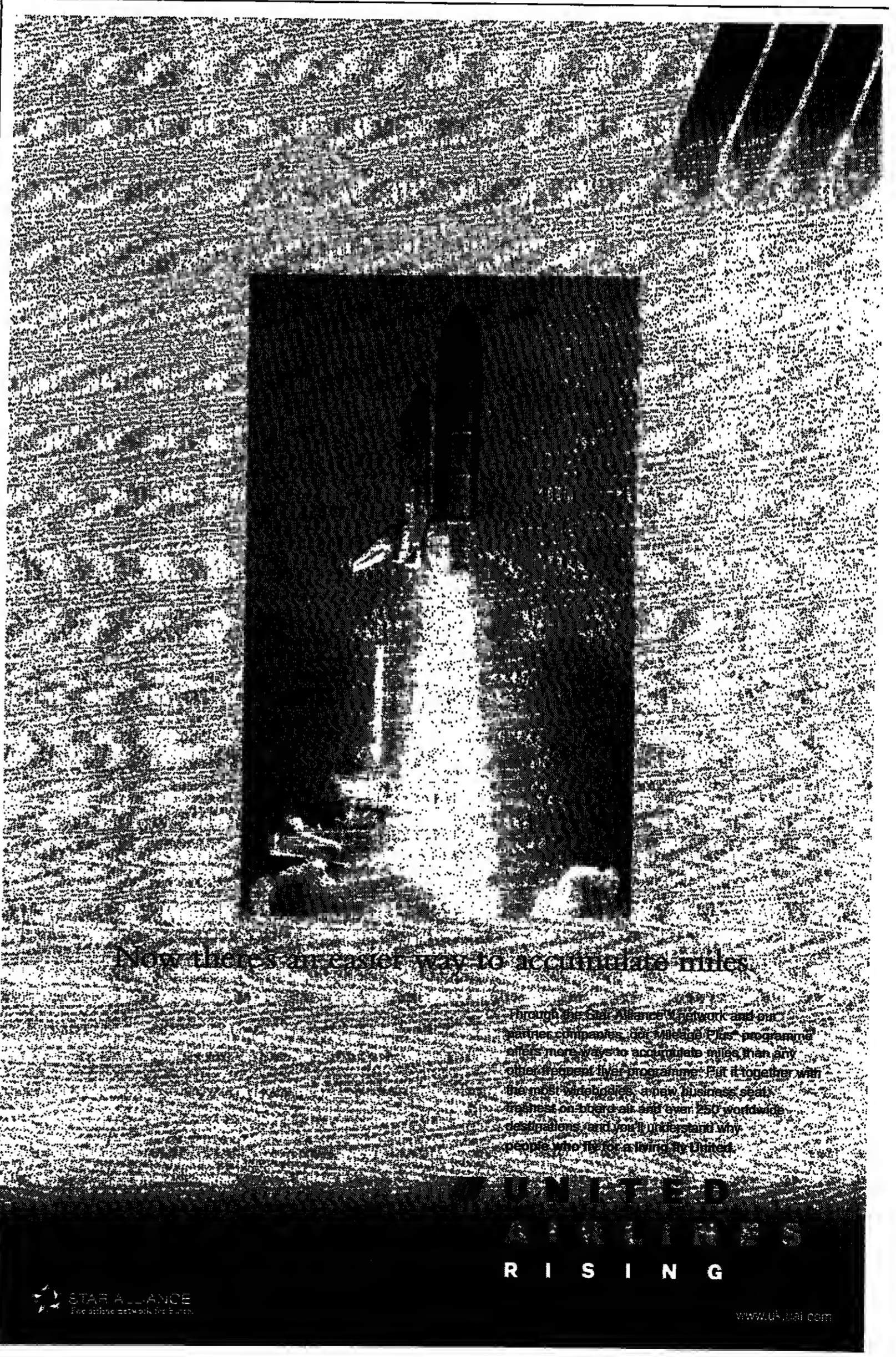
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STAR ALLIANCE
For airline network see p. 28

RISING

ECONOMIC VIEW ANATOLE KALETSKY

Captains of industry put a flawed case for EMU

There is no reason to accept that the 114 petitioners are representative of all business

YESTERDAY'S advertisement in favour of the European single currency, signed by 114 of Britain's "top businessmen", was clearly designed to have a decisive effect on public opinion.

The captains of industry have no better insight than ordinary mortals into constitutional and foreign policy issues, but when it comes to anything involving money, the views of the rich are taken very seriously by the general public.

Even on such quintessential economic questions as the level of taxation or the structure of trade union legislation, business opinions are never regarded as more than one component in the public debate.

The supporters of the single currency, however, are attempting to define the abolition of Britain's economic independence as a purely economic issue.

For all these reasons, yesterday's advertisement in the Financial Times deserves detailed exegesis of a kind that such round-robins rarely receive.



Signatories: from top, left row, Martin Sorrell, chief executive of WPP; Jan Leschly chief executive of SmithKline Beecham; Sir Nigel Rudd, Pilkington chairman; from top, centre row, Lord Tugendhat, chairman of Abbey National; Sir Richard Evans, chief executive of BAE; Sir Denis Henderson, chairman of Rank; Sir Clive Thompson, CBI president; from top, right row, Martin Broughton, BAT chief executive; Tony Greener, chairman of Diageo; and Hilary Cropper, chief executive of FI Group.

argument for Britain joining EMU? The signatories of the ad do not represent a unanimous view in the British business community, or anything like it.

Only four months ago, Business for Sterling, a pressure group set up to oppose British membership of EMU, published a letter in The Times signed by 94 equally prominent businessmen.

For all these reasons, yesterday's advertisement in the Financial Times deserves detailed exegesis of a kind that such round-robins rarely receive.

contents, rather than simply because they were too shy to express their pro-EMU views. There is, after all, nothing embarrassing about appearing in the company of the chairmen of Shell, Unilever, Abbey National, Glaxo and ICI.

Further, the size of some of the companies represented in the advert does not necessarily give their opinions additional weight.

The ad's first substantive assertion is that "the British Government should aim to join the single currency as soon as the conditions for successful entry are in place".

naturally more sympathetic to the EU's bureaucracy agenda, while the signatories of Business for Sterling mostly represented more dynamic entrepreneurial firms.

Now let us turn to the more important question, regardless of whether the FT signatories are representative, do their arguments make any sense?

The ad's first substantive assertion is that "the British Government should aim to join the single currency as soon as the conditions for successful entry are in place".

bank said in a speech last Friday that "a clear condition for a stable single currency will be the political unification of Europe".

Maybe not. The statement goes on to say that, even under the present circumstances, "there are clear economic advantages to British membership and clear disadvantages to long-term self exclusion".

Britain has all of them at the moment, Switzerland has had them for 50 years and, Euro-land may or may not enjoy them in the future.

Finally, after wasting more than half its space on such generalities, the statement comes to some factors that are related to EMU.

Similarly, the single currency may increase intra-European trade, but it will do nothing to encourage trade with other, faster growing, regions of the world.

The hollowness and ambiguity of the economic arguments presented in this latest escalation of pro-EMU rhetoric, demonstrates more clearly than ever that the single currency decision can never be rationally and honestly made on purely economic criteria.

Britain's decision will ultimately have to be made, as it was in Germany, on political, constitutional and historical grounds.

Predator becomes prey as numbers game makes return

As Siebe's 'ninjas' prepare to invade BTR, Carl Mortished reflects on the irony of the takeover

There is an irony in what is happening to BTR. This sprawling engineering group once feared as a hungry, faceless acquisition machine will soon be invaded by Siebe's so-called "black-belt" managers.

The speed was almost unseemly but it seems not much has changed. The game then was earnings per share growth and highly rated conglomerates could get a quick earnings boost by using their paper to buy sleepy companies.

However, the numbers game is back in town and a rather sleepy BTR has now fallen into the lap of Siebe within just 14 days of the initial call to Bob Baumann by Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge.

Siebe, however, dismisses any suggestion that the deal was scribbled together on the back of an envelope, claiming it has long adored BTR for afar which, of course, begs two questions.

The simple answer must be price and the environment. There is no doubt that Siebe is in a jam. Siebe has made a virtue of focus.

Siebe insists that its strategy is all about offering a complete package to customers. BTR makes components and Siebe is big in control systems, buying in the components it needs.

products simply because Siebe wants to offer a total solution. Unfortunately, the real package is more likely to be the earnings boost that Siebe anticipates from using its shares to buy shares in BTR.

Which brings us back to where we came in, among the parsimonious, accounting-driven BTRs and Hansons of the 1980s.

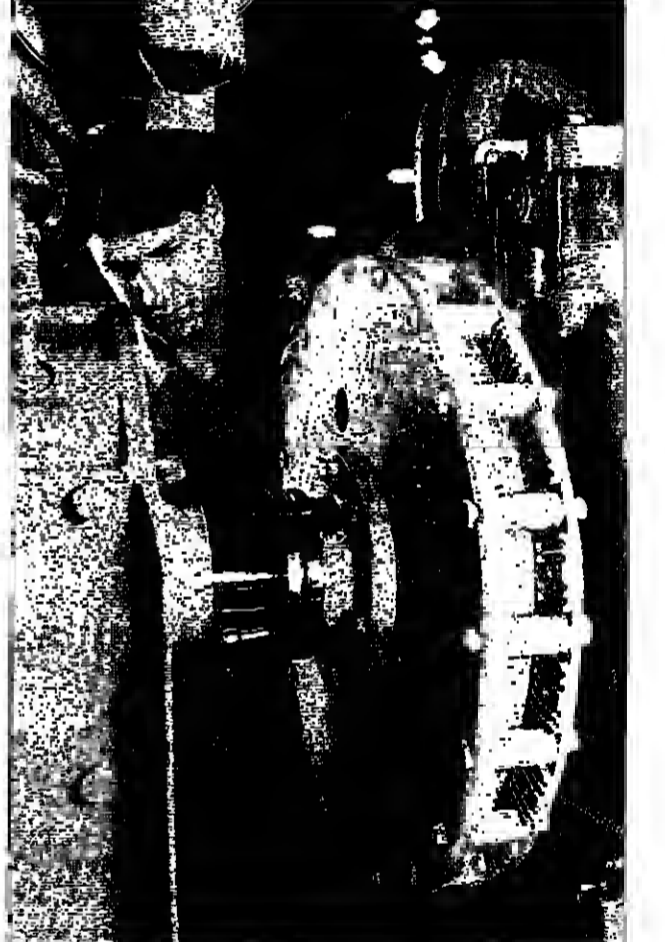
Clearly, part of the BTR strategy is to close the gap. One analyst reflected: "It is harking back to the 1980s. Siebe had done a lot of deals and they need to do more deals to keep it going."

For BTR, the decision to strike such a deal with Siebe is curious. Two or three years ago, the tables could have reversed, had one assumed that BTR had the management ca-

pability and credibility to mount a takeover of Siebe. But Siebe has competitors and it would not be hard for BTR's advisers to conduct an auction of the group.

Today the world appears less prepared to entertain such illusion. Before the bid Siebe was valued on 12.8 times earnings and poor old BTR was worth just eight years of earnings.

Few will regret the passing of the former Birmingham Tyre and Rubber company but Siebe's black belts will find few corporate artefacts to exchange after the recent multibillion-pound disposal programme.



Siebe managers will assess all BTR's engineering products

Frothy speech

FRANK Nicholson, who is leading a management buyout bid for Vaux's two breweries and 350 tenanted pubs, was in trenchant form at last week's annual gathering of the Federation of Licensed Victuallers (FLV).



Nicholson, in trenchant form, showed taste for sibling rivalry

In Vaux's heartland in the North East the fear is that Nicholson's MBO, worth £70-£80 million, will lose out, resulting in the closure of one or both breweries.

Even as Frank Nicholson was crying into his beer, there was cause for cheer in North Wales, where there is a growing conviction that Carlsberg-Tetley will reprise its Wrexham lager brewery.

According to my spies at Licensee and Morning Advertiser, Nicholson concluded his speech to the FLV by declaring: "I regard our board as having made a suicidal and wrong decision to get out of brewing."

The tone of his comments was interesting, not least because the chairman of this deeply misguided board is none other than his brother, Sir Paul Nicholson.

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Count Blades

THE arrival of "Count" Carlo Colombi as the new chairman of Sheffield United is the latest in a long line of colourful characters who have passed through the quoted football club's boardroom.

Tonyandy. He is well known in the gossip columns for his long relationship with the popular chanteuse, Simina, and his friendships with Raine Spencer and Shirley Bassey.

Buzzwords

AN invitation arrives from the splendidly titled Worshipful Company of Information Technologists to a lunch where I will be among "guests drawn from the prime movers and opinion-formers" in the IT industry - guest speaker, Buzz Aldrin.

Wright wrangle

POOR old Chris Wright. Not only does the music-to-football tycoon continue to preside over troubles at both Chrysalis (more losses yesterday) and Queen's Park Rangers football club (they lost 2-1 on Saturday), he is also discovering that love can be a costly commodity.

per cent. I'd rather sell the remaining bits of my wardrobe than reduce it further."

I fear that even Chrysalis's shares might be more valuable on the open market that Wright's apparel.



"I'll put it gently - we've hit a low note"

Advertisement for Rowe & Maw, featuring the word 'big' in large letters and the text 'on small print... and legal minutiae'. It includes the firm's name, 'LAWYERS FOR BUSINESS', and contact information: '20 Black Friars Lane, London EC4V 6HD Telephone: 0171 248 4282'.

Boosey & Hawkes warning strikes dull chord in City

By CHRIS AYRES

SHARES in Boosey & Hawkes, the musical instrument maker and owner of the publishing rights to works by Richard Strauss, Rachmaninov and Stravinsky, fell 20 per cent to 337½p yesterday following a profits warning.

The company — which only recently ended a threat to its independence by paying \$55 million (£33 million) for its largest shareholder — blamed its profit warning mainly on trading in the Far East. Shares in B&H fetched £10.07 in 1997.

Richard Holland, chief executive, said: "Trading has deteriorated further and has spread into other geographical markets, with a negative effect upon sales and margins."

He said B&H would tackle the problem through a £1 million rationalisation of production and distribution costs.

This will include the closure of B&H's Benelux instrument distribution company, the dis-



Holland: tackling problems

posal of its leasehold premises at Hendon in London, and the elimination of its third-party wholesaler in Switzerland.

Before these costs, the company said its pre-tax profits for 1998 were likely to be down 13 per cent on last year at just £7 million. This does not include one-off costs related to its shareholder reorganisation of £1.1 million.

A cost-reduction programme had been put in place at its Japanese instruments division, but would not become profitable during the current year. It added that its Australian markets had been hit by the weak Australian dollar.

Meanwhile, in the UK, the company complained of "an increasing lack of confidence amongst dealers" that had hit sales. In addition, the company said, the strong pound had hit margins on export sales from its Edgware factory.

Mr Holland said: "The group has reacted to the deterioration in its markets by reducing production schedules at its factories in England and France and by implementing cost reductions. However, the benefit of these cost reductions will not be seen in the current year."

In publishing, B&H had experienced "a small decline" that was likely to continue.

Tempus, page 30

CAT signs up again with BASF

BASF Pharma, the drug development side of the German chemicals group, is to work with Cambridge Antibody Technology on a second antibody that could be used to treat rheumatoid arthritis.

In the year to September 30, CAT made a loss of £7 million (£8.4 million loss). Operating costs rose to £11.2 million (£8.3 million) as staff numbers increased to 150. CAT ended the year with £34.8 million cash.

PolyMASC deal
PolyMASC Pharmaceuticals is to receive an undisclosed payment from a licensing deal with Transkaryotic Therapies, a Nasdaq-listed genetic engineering company for the use of its polymer-linking technology.

Jacobs new horizon
Jacobs Holdings, the shipping, transportation and property group, has bought Horizon Holdings, a freight forwarder company, based in Bradford, for up to £22 million.

Cranwick buy
Cranwick, the food group, yesterday announced the acquisition of Cranbury, the sausage-maker, for £3.5 million.

Bid battle looms as Tyco offers \$11.3bn for AMP

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

TYCO INTERNATIONAL, the US firefighting conglomerate, yesterday gave another boost to the resurgent merger mania with a \$11.3 billion (£6.88 billion) takeover bid for AMP, an electronics group.

AMP had been fending off a hostile bid from AlliedSignal worth \$10 billion, in spite of the shareholders' wishes.

AlliedSignal could now return with a higher offer and spark the first significant takeover battle for several months. The sharp fall in share prices in America is believed to have scuppered a number of big deals but, with stock markets now recovering, Wall Street is rediscovering a taste for mergers and takeovers.

This latest takeover deal is valued at \$51 per share, a 12 per cent premium. The combination creates a company with a market capitalisation of about \$54 billion, with annual revenues in excess of \$22 billion.

Dennis Kozlowski, executive chairman of Tyco, said: "We are bringing to Tyco the world's largest electronics

connector company with an exceptionally strong market position and the most respected brand name in the industry."

Bob Ripp, chairman and chief executive of AMP, will serve on Tyco's board and will continue as president of AMP.

AMP, with annual revenues of approximately \$5.5 billion, designs, manufactures and markets a broad range of electronic, electrical and electro-optic connection devices.

The merger is subject to the approval of both companies' shareholders and regulatory approval. The companies anticipate that the transaction will be completed in the first calendar quarter of 1999.

Tyco is the world's largest manufacturer and installer of fire protection systems, the largest provider of electronic security services and the largest manufacturer of flow control valves. It also has business in disposable medical products, plastics and adhesives, electrical and electronic components and underwater telecommunications systems.



Colin Prescott has C&W backing for his epic balloon trip

Up, up and away to some serious money

LATER this month, two men will clamber into a small capsule, the size of a child's bedroom, where they intend to spend up to three weeks attempting to fly around the world in a balloon.

The venture by Andy Elson and Colin Prescott is nothing new. We all know about Richard Branson and his rather unsuccessful attempts to achieve this great feat of endurance, as well as the rather more successful one by Steve Fossett, the American millionaire. Indeed, all in all, six teams are in a race to complete this strange and unusual task.

Three things, however, make Elson and Prescott's attempt different. The first is Elson. He is the holder of the world record for the longest continuous balloon flight — a little short of ten days in Breitling Orbiter last year.

The second is that Cable & Wireless, the telecoms group, is putting up the best part of £2 million to sponsor this attempt. This is a huge expenditure for what is essentially a classic example of stunt marketing — putting a company's name on a feat of endurance in expectation of gaining a large amount of media coverage.

Cable & Wireless will hope that the flight will generate enough "And finally..." spots on *News At Ten* (or *News at 6.30* and *11* as it soon will become) to make the expenditure worthwhile.

And finally, this is where Prescott comes in. He is the founder and chief executive of Flying Pictures, Britain's leading experts in stunt marketing. The company, founded 21 years ago, has notched up seven "And finally..." spots in the past ten years, as well as having clients featured on *ITV's Don't Try This At Home* and *You Bet*, the BBC's *Record Breakers* and many other television programmes on terrestrial and satellite TV, not to mention the front pages of *The Express*, *The Mail* on Sunday and this newspaper.

The business started after Prescott was taken on a balloon ride by an Afghan princess called Safai Taxi and realised that this was a good idea for ambient media because everybody was looking up at them. It moved on to balloon displays at county shows and sporting events, developed into TV with an advert for Tango and along the way ended up working on a series of feature films including *Mission Impossible*, *Saving Private Ryan* and a host of Bond movies. The client list includes J Sainsbury, Coca-Cola, Jaguar Cars, Lurpak, Unipart, Mercier, the champagne house, the city of Vienna and Fox Broadcasting.

Along the way, stunt marketing has evolved into a finely tuned art form. Cable & Wireless's investment in the balloon race (which is quite a bit less than Virgin boss's obsession) is a bit of a howitzer approach. According to Lucius Pearte, who, in addition to being the son of the founder of the Ann Summers chain of sex shops, is also a co-director of Flying Pictures, the ideal stunt marketing project is more of a sniper shot, where for expenditure of a few thousand pounds, the client can obtain media coverage worth ten times as much.

Up till now, the company's biggest project has been Coca-Cola's "Right Choice Tour", in which two balloons flew through the Middle East promoting the drink. In addition to piloting the first balloons to be allowed across Saudi Arabian air space and performing the world's highest trapeze act, the team also staged the world's highest tightrope walk at Luxor in Egypt. This was filmed by WTM, the international news agency, and ended up on more than 130 television channels around the world. Not a bad return on Coke's £500,000 investment.

However, most marketers spend much less than that. For instance, the Merrier bubbles balloon — which was an "And finally..." — cost just £20,000. For a little bit more, Flying Pictures can virtually guarantee a spot on television with something like a water-skiing or abseiling stunt. Flying Pictures not only sets up the stunts, it films and photographs it with its own film crew and will then provide a ready-made package for a TV programme or a newspaper for a fraction of what it would cost the programme to make it.

"To be honest it is getting easier and easier to place things on TV," says Pearte. "There's more tabloid television being made and tighter budgets to make these shows."

In addition, Flying Pictures can ensure that stunts take place without member of the public being endangered — a major issue.

However, Flying Pictures has to be sure that the stunt attempted is bona fide — ideally something that might be included in the *Guinness Book of Records* — and will not breach Independent Television Commission guidelines on coverage of sponsored events. This often involves detailed discussions with the ITC, but, as yet, Flying Pictures has not had any stunt kicked off the screens.

After all, there is no point setting up a marketing stunt if there is no media to report it.



JASON NISSE

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drop on its cashflow... operations... returns will... shares... times the six... 9 per... cheap...

LOGISTICAL PROBLEM



ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Table listing stocks in the Alcoholic Beverages sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

BANKS

Table listing stocks in the Banks sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

BREWERIES, Pubs & REST

Table listing stocks in the Breweries, Pubs & Rest sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

Table listing stocks in the Diversified Industrials sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

ELECTRICITY

Table listing stocks in the Electricity sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

BUILDING MATERIALS

Table listing stocks in the Building Materials sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

CHEMICALS

Table listing stocks in the Chemicals sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

ENGINEERING

Table listing stocks in the Engineering sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

CONSTRUCTION

Table listing stocks in the Construction sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

DISTRIBUTORS

Table listing stocks in the Distributors sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

Table listing stocks in the Engineering, Vehicles sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

Equities continue to surge

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the first group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the second group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the third group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the fourth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the fifth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the sixth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the seventh group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the eighth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the ninth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the tenth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the eleventh group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the twelfth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the thirteenth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the fourteenth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the fifteenth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the sixteenth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the seventeenth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the eighteenth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the nineteenth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the twentieth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the twenty-first group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the twenty-second group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the twenty-third group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the twenty-fourth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the twenty-fifth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the twenty-sixth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the twenty-seventh group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the twenty-eighth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the twenty-ninth group of equities.

High Low Company Price

Table listing high, low, and company prices for the thirtieth group of equities.

PRINTING & PAPER

Table listing stocks in the Printing & Paper sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

MINING

Table listing stocks in the Mining sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

LEISURE & HOTELS

Table listing stocks in the Leisure & Hotels sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

PROPERTY

Table listing stocks in the Property sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Table listing stocks in the Telecommunications sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

TRANSPORT

Table listing stocks in the Transport sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

WATER

Table listing stocks in the Water sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

Table listing stocks in the Alternative Investment Market with columns for company name, price, and volume.

RETAILERS GENERAL

Table listing stocks in the Retailers General sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Table listing stocks in the Support Services sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

IWC advertisement featuring a pocket watch and text: 'Why many people will try for a pilots fence this year. Why few will get one. IWC International Watch Co. Schaffhausen, Switzerland'.

OTHER FINANCIAL

Table listing other financial instruments with columns for instrument name, price, and volume.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Table listing stocks in the Pharmaceuticals sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

MEDIA

Table listing stocks in the Media sector with columns for company name, price, and volume.

SHORTS (under 6 years)

Table listing short-term instruments with columns for instrument name, price, and volume.

LONGS (over 15 years)

Table listing long-term instruments with columns for instrument name, price, and volume.

INDEX-LINKED on projected inflation of 5% 9%

Main table containing unit trust prices for various funds, including columns for fund names, share prices, and other financial metrics.

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The I renai

Advertisement for 'The I renai' featuring a large image of a person and various text elements.

كندا من الأصل



OPERA
The staging
of Peake's
Gormenghast
PAGE 36

THE TIMES ARTS

GALLERIES
Bourgeois
visions at the
Serpentine
PAGE 37



The Mersey renaissance

Museums and galleries are leading the way in the cultural rebirth of Liverpool, as Simon Tait reports

You can pick your metaphor for Liverpool's cultural renaissance. You could have Julie Goodyear, retired from a life pulling pints in the Rover's Return and now launched on a new career by Liverpool District Council as "cultural ambassador" for Merseyside. Or you could have the *Spirit of Liverpool*, carved in 1877 to celebrate the maritime trading wealth of the city which paid for the Walker Gallery. The *Spirit*, ravaged by pollution from its position above the Walker's entrance, has now been replaced by a replica carved in hard Chinese marble. The original greets visitors in the new Conservation Centre in Liverpool, where the latest laser techniques have restored it.

have also been awarded £24 million of lottery money, the biggest Heritage Lottery Fund grant yet. The museums are getting about a million visitors a year. 60,000 of them to the Conservation Centre, where they are going for the performance as much as for the objects, everything from textiles and sculpture to parts of ocean liners. Through closed circuit television visitors not only see museum pieces being restored but

'The museum is a social as well as a cultural and educational institution'

The winding-down of the docks, the council estate riots, the municipal sleaze: all these negative images of Liverpool are being thrust out of sight, while to the fore comes culture. Glasgow did it in 1990 on the back of being named European City of Culture; Liverpool is doing it on the strength of its European Museum of the Year Award for the Conservation Centre.

are talked through the procedure by conservators to whom they can chat. "What has happened is that these experts have suddenly become public personalities," says Richard Foster, the director of the NMGM since the group was created in 1986. There are plans for programmes about heritage conservation on cable and satellite television.

"What hasn't been properly appreciated so far is Liverpool's cultural identity," says Neil Rami, marketing director of the Mersey Partnership, a consortium of local businesses. "We think that the potential for tourism and as a city breaks resort is absolutely enormous."

"We needed to break down the apartheid which exists in museums but doesn't exist in the same way in, say, a library. I've always been critical of the museum profession for being so slow to try these techniques out. The museum is a social as well as a cultural and educational institution."

Having won the European award, the Conservation Centre is using the *Spirit of Liverpool* as a symbol of the restoration of the city's cultural spirit. Liverpool's symphony orchestra is now back in its own hall, its Playhouse Theatre is being rescued by a local business consortium and the Tate Gallery in Albert Dock has just been enlarged.

The lottery grant provides the bulk of a £33 million NMGM 2001 project, part of whose purpose is to spread the anti-apartheid mission which began five years ago in the flagship Liverpool Museum with the Jason Project. This linked museum visitors with the underwater excavations of Bob Ballard, the man who found the *Titanic*. The audi-

ence in the lecture theatre could steer the submersible carrying the camera, as well as question the archaeologists. At the same time, the Natural History Centre was started, getting visitors handling objects with curators present, and even introducing live animals to the discovery process. Next will come the Exploration Zone, extending the natural history project to ethnology and archaeology, and also allowing visitors to scroll through the entire collections — not just the 10 per cent on display — to find the item they really want to know about, and to have it brought to them by a curator.

Reaching even further will be InfoWorld Theatre in the Liverpool Museum, a telematic link to museums and collections across the world. "We want people to be able to exercise much more personal choice about what they see," says Foster. "The idea is to try to increase the literacy of the object: do you get your knowledge of past civilisations entirely from books or can you also get it from objects?"

"The answer is you can, but on the whole you get it by looking at the objects in a glass case which the curator has chosen for you and put on display. We are enabling people to learn how to handle objects, how to look at them, to appreciate scale and texture and the information they contain."

● Museum information on 0151-207 0001



The *Spirit of Liverpool* statue towers over Andrew Durham, keeper of the city's award-winning Conservation Centre

Secret is out

IF EVER there was a performer whose reputation preceded her, it is Lucinda Williams. Critical acclaim for her album, *Car Wheels on a Gravel Road*, has been unstinting, and deservedly so. Rootier than Sheryl Crow but rockier than Emmylou Harris, it is a gorgeous album of American music exploring with fresh vigour the age-old themes of love and friendships won and lost on the dusty highway of life.

POP

But, in a career spanning twenty years and more, Williams, 45, had rarely played in Britain until Sunday night. Expectations were perhaps unrealistically high as she took the stage at the Shepherd's Bush

Empire wearing an ornate belt, a sequinned guitar strap and a cowboy hat as big as Dwight Yoakam's. If she took her fashion cues from her current place of residence, Nashville, then her tequila-and-lime voice, with its long, lazy drawl, came from a lot further south.

Her group arrived mob-handed with guitarists, a line of four Mount Rushmore faces standing to either side of her and drummer Donald Lindley. But their parts were meticulously scripted and the groove was well and truly in the pocket as they set off with slow *Pineola*, a languid *Metal Firecracker* and the easy-rocking *Car Wheels on a Gravel Road*, songs that swayed as naturally as the 12-inch tassels on bass player Richard Price's jacket.

Williams's most celebrated song, *Passionate Kisses*, was saved for late on in the set, prompting one of her best vocal performances of the night, ably bolstered by the harmony singing of Jim Lauderdale. But despite the appeal of her music and the dapper soloing of guitarists John Jackson and Kenneth Vaughan, there was a lack of dynamic tension and variety in the performance overall. This was not helped by a sloppy sequence of encores, during which a guest harmonica player was inexplicably cold-shouldered off the stage, and the audience was blamed for the premature collapse of a half-hearted 12-bar blues jam. Williams is in the big league now, and needs to work up a show that does better justice to her songs than this.

JEREMY KINGSTON

DAVID SINCLAIR

Journey to Hell on a first-class ticket

After itemising the messiness of various kinds of suicide, Dorothy Parker's suggestion was: "You might as well live." By contrast, the mysterious M. Henri in this play by Anouilh concludes his similar summary with the opposite advice: so out goes young Orpheus to meet a quick, clean death, because if some deaths are messy, life is messier.

THEATRE



play is a classic, precisely catching a national mood, and to some extent an international mood, fixed on rejecting compromise with anything that smacked of the corrupt.

Written in 1941, the play reflects the despair of that time and the pessimism of the decade before it. Like many plays of the period Anouilh's treatment of the legend of Orpheus's doomed love for Eurydice contains characters who come on for a scene and then vanish, testing the nerve of companies in today's straitened times. Set in the refreshment-room of a provincial station and in the bedroom of a

seedy Marseilles hotel, the cast includes two waiters, a bus driver, a policeman and half a dozen members of a touring theatrical troupe, one of whom is Eurydice's posturing mother (an amusing Maev Alexander), who once acted with Sarah Bernhardt and doesn't want it forgotten.

Orpheus, a musician burdened with a father endlessly recalling restaurants visited in happier years, meets the actress Eurydice while waiting for a train. Not only is it love at first sight but he wants her to be noble, innocent and unsullied, all of which she would like to have been for him. But alas, life is such that a virginal past is something she cannot bring him.

shows himself at once sympathetically and foolishly honest. Everything about him warns us that he is bound to test what she says against the look in her eyes, and thus lose her a second time.

splendidly played by Edward de Souza with a deep grainy voice that sounds as if it comes bubbling through a jeroobam of great wine. Making what Orpheus abandons seem so vitally sordid provides the theatrical tension that keeps the play working today.

But Anouilh stops his play drifting away from earth by bringing back Orpheus's unashamedly sensual Father, here

Grief follows. Rosanna Lowe's tear-streaked gamine face is properly haunting but she also gives her lines a hard edge that cancels out their occasional feyness. Ian Targett's Orpheus, so dangerously demanding truth at all costs.

BUILDING A LIBRARY A guide to the best available classical recordings, presented in conjunction with BBC Radio 3

SCHUMANN'S KINDERSZENEN
Reviewed by
Piers Lane

Robert Schumann's piano pieces *Kinderszenen*, or *Scenes from Childhood*, transport us into that dreamy, twilight world of innocent childhood memories. A truly great performance will evoke warm recognition in us of emotions experienced in our formative years. Schumann himself was 27 when he was inspired to "knock off about 30 quaint little pieces", from which he selected 13 for publication as a set. Unlike the later *Album for the Young* which he composed for his children to play, *Kinderszenen* was a collection of reminiscences of a grown-up for grown-ups to play. There are ten very grown-up performances to choose from today, starting with Clara Haskill's 1955 Philips version. It has lovely moments, but overall is perhaps a slightly "bad hair" day, neither as meticulous nor as intuitively in-

spired as others of her Schumann recordings. There are three available Horowitz recordings, two of them live performances with the usual Horowitz trademarks of opulent sound, inimitable singing tone and extraordinary games with rhythm, rubato and touch. As with the dazzlingly temperamental Martha Argerich, though, I question whether such over-the-top personality equates with this eloquently simple (although elusive) German music. Vladimir Ashkenazy has interesting ideas, particularly in the more lyrical pieces, but is at the mercy of a slightly ugly recorded sound. Daniel Barenboim seems to invest more in right-hand charm than in the overall texture on this occasion. While Alfred Brendel's Philips offering is wonderfully rounded and obviously home territory for him, Radu Lupu's 1995 Decca recording is even more compellingly intense. At first he seems so concerned with puri-

ty of line and tone that his child's vision may lack a little wonder, but he soon seduces the listener with limpid tone and penetrating focus. In my view, however, the Hungarian Annie Fischer (EMI CZS 5 68733-2 two discs, £15.99) has a warmth of tone and emotional imagination ideal for Schumannesque Romanticism. There is an underlying strength of character without imposed effect. The cycle unfolds simply, subtly and unselfishly — truly, a poet speaks in this performance.

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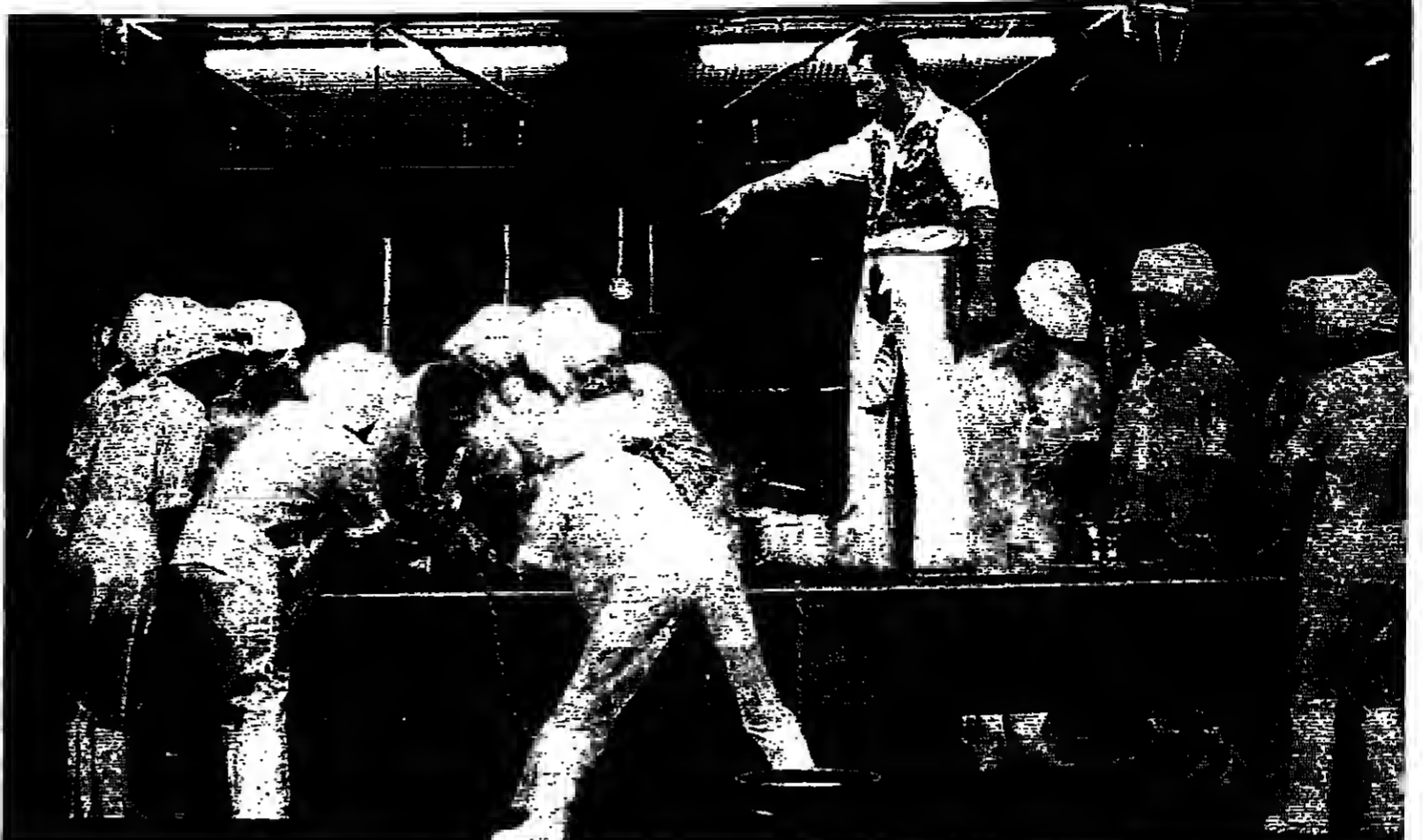
MARCO POLO: The journeys of the Venetian traveller furnish the inspiration for Tan Dun's stirring opera...

ELSEWHERE: An evening offering the opportunity to hear not only the Greater Orchestra under Robert Ziegler...

Philip Glass gives a talk at the Belfast Festival

There is often a perfectly simple moral to be drawn from even the most complex operatic action...

This is, of course, implied rather than stated in Mervyn Peake's trilogy...



Rocky horror show: Steerpike (Stefan Vinberg, crouching) and Swelter (Markus Heinrich) in Irmin Schmidt's opera, loosely based on Mervyn Peake

audience in Wuppertal. The orchestral score is on tape, prepared by Jörg Blum...

rock music this is what it would have sounded like — gloriously, unashamedly lush.

— indeed, it was a surprise to find Peake's swasty Dickensian grotesque, Swelter, sung by a smart rock star...

The opera singers fought back the baritone Mark Morouse outstanding in Lord Sepulchre's long, exceptional but beautiful aria before his transfiguration into an owl...

duction was lively enough, in over-complicated and unhealthy decor. But the ear was consistently engaged...

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London

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ELFURRY: Edward de Souza, Ian Targett with Patricia Lowe as the docile heroine in the West End. Cast includes Kathryn Evans...

INTO THE WOODS: Soncham's nightmarish take on favourite fairy tales. John Crowley directs the winter musical...

KAPKA'S DICK: Alan Bennett's autobiography, with music by John Gordon-Sinclair and Eric Syster...

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

Geoff Brown's choice of the latest movies

ANGEL SHARNS (15): Hectic, fizzy French film about restless teenagers on the Riviera...

DEAD MAN'S CURVE (15): Derivative horror comedy-thriller, with some smart dialogue...

THE EEL (15): Shohei Imamura's idiosyncratic and humane drama about a man perched after working time for mucking the wife...

THE FOUNTAINHEAD (PG): Amy Rand's honest novel about a visionary architect...

LESS INEVITABLE (12): Straight dramatic reworking of Victor Hugo's novel, with Liam Neeson and Geoffrey Rush...

MY NAME IS JOE (15): Reformed Glasgow alcoholic begins an awkward romance with a healthcare worker...

ROUNDERS (15): Lovely details, but a disjointed performance with Matt Damon as a law student who succumbs to the gambling itch...

CURRENT BLADE (18): Extravagant, jumbled horror thriller, run for a time, with Wesley Snipes as the vampire-hunting action hero...

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Faded by comparison

The essential Simon Holt - whose 40th birthday year coincides with the 21st Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival - is contained in his turbulent and yet supremely coherent Capriccio Spettrale...

CONCERTS

prevailing calm, lucidly expressed though it is. The title of the piano piece actually comes from The Nightingale's 'to Blame'...

by Capriccio Spettrale, proved to be an uneasy comparison also with the Holt of today. It is true that the new Holt score, although written specifically for Rolf Hind...

It made Luis de Pablo's Book of Mirrors, a work of a not entirely dissimilar dramatic inspiration, seem unfortunally and overtone...

More seriously, the Holt of ten years ago, as represented

Mahler's monumental song-symphony

Mahter's monumental song-symphony, Das Lied von der Erde, is not the rarity it once was. It appears with regularity in the London concert diary, but with depressing and almost equal regularity...

Good night, Vienna

Once again it was plain just how fortunate the Philharmonia is to have this great musician as its principal conductor...

Good night, Vienna

loneliness and unrequited love with heartbreaking eloquence. This farewell to life and love is quintessentially Viennese...

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ARTS

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What a tangled web she weaves

VISUAL ART: Richard Cork ponders the spiders and spectres that haunt Louise Bourgeois' Serpentine show



Louise Bourgeois with her *Articulated Lair*, left, and, right, her 1996 *Spider IV*: the trauma of childhood betrayal seems profoundly to have affected her vision as an artist

Now in her late eighties, Louise Bourgeois shows no sign of lapsing into a harmless dotage. The more years she accumulates, the more agitated she becomes. Her recent work at the Serpentine Gallery is fuelled by rage, despondency, yearning, mockery and dread. Looking forward, she abhors the prospect of extinction. Looking back, she rails at the pain of childhood memories.

Although autobiographical concerns feed everything produced by this indomitable woman, she always manages to widen her work out. *Spider*, the most spectacular exhibit, may have originated in feelings about the benevolence of her mother. But as it rears like a science-fiction phantasm high above our heads, the outsize insect takes on an imaginative life of its own.

Menacing and protective, the spider is ensconced on a

mesh' cage. Glassy, egg-like forms are slung beneath her, and she seems bent on nurturing them. At the same time, though, the legs sprouting from her head look ominously prepared to strike. And the fragments of bone tied to the mesh look at first like macabre traces of the spider's victims.

Inside the cage, a room with faded furniture does nothing to combat the ominous mood. Bourgeois' parents ran a tapestry workshop in Paris, and the torn fabric lodged in the mesh bears witness to her mother's skill. On one level the tapestry sums up the positive side of her girlhood.

But the scraps shown here look melancholy as well. They are bound up with Bourgeois' feelings about her father, who had a decade-long affair with the family's English governess. Even today Bourgeois still feels intensely about this double betrayal, perpetrated by adults who had once com-



manded her love and loyalty. The trauma profoundly affected her vision as an artist, and goes a long way towards accounting for the desolation of the room within the cage.

In this context, bones can be seen as the wan remnants of a family relationship shattered and consigned to a premature grave. Elsewhere, however, they assume a broader meaning. In an untitled work made two years ago, larger bones are slung on hooks projecting like branches from an upright steel rod. Each bone acts, in turn, as a makeshift hanger for a garment.

Vintage dresses salvaged by Bourgeois from old chests and cupboards are suspended here, redolent of the interwar period when the artist's parents bought her clothing by Chanel and Poiret. They tried to rival each other by dressing her up, so that she became, in Bourgeois' sardonic phrase, a "bone of contention".

ances; and a humpy, elongated sausage covered in a stocking.

Both these forms, with their lumpy suggestiveness, prove that humour plays a potent part in Bourgeois' work. She retains an awareness of life's inherent absurdity—nowhere more alarmingly than in *The Couple II*, where a pair of headless figures seem embroiled in joyless sex.

The male lies on top of the female, but his penis is limp and forlorn. Futility prevails, and the black fabric swathing both bodies gives a funereal air. The glinting, knee-brace clamped to the woman's leg reinforces the suspicion that they are confined inside an emotional straitjacket as well.

Bourgeois' work is never afraid to approach abstraction. After all, when she left France in 1938 and settled in New York, Manhattan was about to become the crucible for the century's most audacious upsurge of abstract experimentation. But her own work never leaves the human presence behind. However many materials Bourgeois brings together in a single multi-referential sculpture, her involvement with the body provides the unifying link.

Often its physical substance is missing: the long undergarment hanging like an executioner's victim in a work called *Spindle* is empty. But Bourgeois ensures that it conveys an intensely human pathos, and in an elaborate structure titled *Cell (Clothes)* she crowds a room with people represented solely by garments.

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Verdi

"Much of her work can be seen as a litany of anger"

But there is a more universal significance. Bourgeois establishes a stark opposition between her vanished youth and the imminence of death. As a *memento mori*, it has a nightmarish ferocity. The steel rod might easily begin to revolve, turning the entire work into a merry-go-round of rasping, medieval intensity.

Her readiness to confront the unavoidability of death makes Bourgeois seem close to today's young artists. Her influence has surely been greater than anyone suspects, and it is made all the more pervasive by her fascination with the power of found objects.

In another untitled work, also from 1996, she relies for the largest form on the sawn-off stump of a real tree. Hanging by a ring from a metal branch, it looks like a misshapen corpse left to rot on a wayside gallows. But she is not a literal artist. The forms dangling from other sections of the sculpture are less identifiable: a sewn-up garment bulging with breast-like protuber-

ation. But her own work never leaves the human presence behind. However many materials Bourgeois brings together in a single multi-referential sculpture, her involvement with the body provides the unifying link.

Often its physical substance is missing: the long undergarment hanging like an executioner's victim in a work called *Spindle* is empty. But Bourgeois ensures that it conveys an intensely human pathos, and in an elaborate structure titled *Cell (Clothes)* she crowds a room with people represented solely by garments.

This time, the viewer is prevented from entering the space they occupy. Like voyeurs, we are obliged to peer through smeared windows. The words sewn in red capitals on a coat can, however, be clearly made out: "The Cold of Anxiety is Very Real."

It reads like a *cri de coeur* from someone who has spent a lifetime confronting spectres from her past. On the evidence of this deeply unsettling show, they refuse to be vanquished. But Bourgeois proves a redoubtable opponent, and the struggle gives her the impetus to produce brave and enduring art.

Louise Bourgeois is at the Serpentine Gallery (0171-275 1521) until Jan 10, sponsored by BMW Financial Services Group

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Let's get together and work outside the law

Mediation, funded by legal aid, saves money, say Andrew Lockley and Nick Armstrong

The growth of mediation has been one of the most significant developments in English civil justice in recent years. The requirement for two parties, a dispute and a neutral third party able to help the parties to identify areas of possible agreement.

Last month one of the last obstacles to the development of mediation was removed. After a successful legal challenge by the law firm Irwin Mitchell, the Legal Aid Board decided to start funding mediation.

The case that gave rise to Irwin Mitchell's challenge was a dispute between its client, Nigel Wilkinson, an accountant from Barnsley, and his firm, which dismissed Mr Wilkinson from the practice without adequate compensation. Mr Wilkinson was entitled to legal aid with a financial contribution because his income suffered a drastic cut.

A resolution was reached in mediation arranged by the Alternative Dispute Resolution Group without the need to issue proceedings. The Legal Aid Board then disallowed Irwin Mitchell's costs of representing Mr Wilkinson in the mediation, in accordance with its policy. That policy has proved controversial in the past and has now been jettisoned as based on an out-of-date interpretation of the law.

Under the aegis of senior judges including Lord Woolf, the Master of the Rolls, mediation schemes have been set up in a number of courts.

Proponents of mediation cite many advantages over litigation; they point to its success rate in bringing about settlements where there used to be none. Clients are empowered by its more informal processes,



Out of court clients are empowered by the more informal processes of mediation, giving them a greater role

es, enabling them to play a greater part. Mediation is cheaper and produces better quality results than litigation, which binds parties into a yes/no, right/wrong polarity.

The Legal Aid Board's decision means that these advantages will no longer be available only in cases where everybody is paying privately. It will, for example, affect personal injury cases, where the injured person is legally aided.

Until now, even if the defendant's insurer has been wanting mediation, the injured person could not agree because they could not get the funding. Medical negligence cases are also often appropriate for mediation because sitting across a table from the defendants and describing injuries can go some way towards satisfying the plaintiff's need for a day in court.

Professional negligence cases also benefit. Actions against solicitors, accountants or other professionals are often tricky. Even if it can be established that the plaintiff was not well served, there are often complex arguments. Supporting the plaintiff had been advised properly, would they have gone ahead anyway? Sometimes, the informal atmosphere of a mediation is the place to iron out difficulties.

Irwin Mitchell is dealing with at least three professional negligence claims in which the defendants suggested mediation but, until last month, the firm could not agree to it. Two of these are actions against firms of solicitors for clients who say they were badly served. The third case is an action against a firm of accountants for an alleged failure to

advise the plaintiffs early enough to withdraw from a loss-making project. Here, the defendants have suggested mediation as a way of narrowing the issues in dispute and assessing the risks of continuing with the litigation.

This is another use of mediation. Even if a settlement is not reached, both parties will gain a better idea of the case and costs are saved. Mediation is a consensual process. There is nothing to force people to sign an agreement if they think that it does not represent their interests.

Mediation will never replace litigation. There will always be definitive decisions handed down in litigation. Mediation does not suit all clients, particularly when there is a serious inequality of bargaining power. It should take place only when the likely recovery through litigation has been assessed. Yet now that there are no longer two classes of litigant, everybody has access to mediation.

• The authors are members of Irwin Mitchell's professional services unit

Abuse at home still haunts us

Ulrika Jonsson, Sheryl Gascoigne, Parrah Fawcett and Pamela Anderson — all victims of abuse from their partners — may not be aware that tomorrow is International Day Against Violence Towards Women. But the attacks on them have emphasised that such abuse is global.

The Government's paper *Supporting Families* showed that domestic attacks are the most common violent crime against women; one in nine is subject to severe beatings by her partner, it says.

Other sources put the figure at one in five. In 1996 almost half of female homicide victims were killed by their partners.

Many regions now have domestic violence units. But often women see the police as a male-dominated service, which may deter women — those from ethnic minorities, in particular — from reporting crimes.

Police practices of "no-crime" and "down-criming" domestic abuse mean that if a woman complains to the police, she may face an unenviable choice: refuse to give evidence and be punished by her partner.

For many women, refuges provide the only escape route. Yet there are only about 400 in England, half the number recommended by the Government in 1975. This year more than 22,000 women and 32,000 children resorted to using refuges.

Baroness Jay of Paddington, Leader of the Lords and Minister for Women, recently unveiled the Government's new strategy on women's issues which includes a campaign to make domestic violence socially unacceptable.

National strategy should aim to provide more refuges and help lines, to improve police response and to end the release of offend-



CHRIS BARTON

ers on bail. There should also be amendments to legislation; first, to the Family Law Act 1996, which extended protection through injunctions to former spouses and cohabitants as well as present ones. But discriminatory amendments giving lesser protection to cohabitants were then made, including limited periods of exclusion for violent partners and an exhortation that the court consider that the couples "have not given each other the commitment involved in marriage".

Secondly, the Children Act 1989 should contain a presumption against residence or contact orders where a violent parent is making the application. Where parents have separated, child contact gives some fathers the ability to abuse, harass and exert control over women and children. The 1989 Act has paved the way for a strong presumption of contact between the child and the non-resident parent. Mothers who try to deny fathers contact have been labelled "implacably hostile". This judicial insistence that contact orders should fulfil children's rights, even when children have been the victims of domestic violence, goes against growing evidence of the damaging effects on children of a violent home life.

We should follow the example of the US and Australia, where legislation contains a rebuttable presumption that a contact order would not be in the best interests of the child where the applicant has used violence against the child. Hopefully, this can be achieved during the European Year Against Violence Towards Women in 1999.

• Professor Chris Barton and Mary Hibbs are members of Staffordshire University's Centre for the Study of the Family, Law and Social Policy

A novel look back in anger?

VERONICA LOWE is planning a comeback. Remember her? She was the figure every solicitor loved to hate during her controversial tenure as head of the much reviled Solicitors' Complaints Bureau. After repeated clashes with Martin Mears, then Law Society President, she left to head up the Valuation Office Agency. She hit the headlines again when she left the agency with a £54,000 pay-off, having spent seven months of her 18 months there on sick leave. Now she is planning to make a name in a different field. She is writing a novel. Though she is keeping the subject under wraps, staff at the Law Society believe she will be unable to resist the temptation to draw on her experiences there.

ernial Criminal Bar Association: Brian Barker, QC, Barker follows in the steps of his wife, Anne Rafferty, QC, who held the post from 1995 to 1997.

THE Law Society is in the midst of yet another attempt to revamp itself, guided by the management guru Sir Denis Stevenson, the chairman of Pearson. His recommendation that Chancery Lane should run itself like a successful business has struck a chord with many members of the Law Society's Council. There is, however, one aspect of this analogy that has failed to impress Michael Mathews, the Law Society President. He was horrified when he came across an internal paper which suggested that, like any successful business, the Law Society should grow bigger.

MORE THAN 5,000 solicitors have asked for information packs on how to become accredited as panel members under the proposed Family Law Panel. Marilyn Stowe, the Leeds-based divorce lawyer who is chief examiner and chief assessor of the panel, says certificates should be awarded in the new year.

CALLING all students: entries for The Times Law Awards with One Essex Court must be in by December 4. Prizes totalling more than £6,000 will be offered for the best-argued essays of up to 1,000 words on: Access to Justice — who pays the price? Details from The Times's website, www.oneessexcourt.co.uk or 0171-583 2000.

PROSECUTORS at the Crown Prosecution Service are reporting an easing of tension since the arrival of the new Director of Public Prosecutions, David Calvert-Smith, QC. Staff there are already comparing him to the last but one DPP, the easygoing and much liked Allan Green, QC. "The new DPP has many of his qualities," says one prosecutor. "Without, we think, necessarily all his proclivities." Calvert-Smith's departure has meant the appointment of a new chairman of the influ-

RENEE CALDER against her. In announcing the settlement of the libel action, leading counsel for Ms Calder said that the parties had agreed that it was an opportune moment to record that a wasted costs order against Ms Calder in 1992 had been overturned by the Court of Appeal in 1994, thereby vindicating Ms Calder.

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The solicitor who never was

A case against a law firm argues that clients should expect to be seen by a lawyer. Frances Gibb reports

Legal advice does not come cheap. So when the services of a solicitor are called for, is it unreasonable to expect a lawyer to deal with the problem personally? Last week, in the Court of Appeal, a man won the right to bring a test challenge over a £2,600 legal bill after he and other clients discovered that the "solicitor" handling their affairs was in fact a clerk.

No other profession is allowed to get away with it

Stuart Pilbrow, a refrigeration engineer, is bringing the case after discovering that when he sought legal advice in a matrimonial dispute from Pearless de Rougemont in East Grinstead, West Sussex, his affairs were handled by a woman who, at the time, was not even a legal executive.

Even though I went into the office asking for a solicitor, I was not told that she was not one.

The action arose after Mr Pilbrow went to Pearless de Rougemont for several months in 1996 over a dispute with his ex-wife about the name of their child. Some 15 months later, he met a former employee of the law firm and discovered that Mrs Lee-Haswell was a clerk. "I then told them that I was not prepared to pay the bill and they took me to court over it," he says. Mr Pilbrow counter-claimed, maintaining that the firm had misrepresented him. The district judge ruled against him and — acting for himself — he appealed and lost.



Stuart Pilbrow is challenging a £2,600 legal bill: "I am being ordered to pay for something I never had"

Mrs Lee-Haswell has since discovered that Mrs Lee-Haswell was not even a legal executive, although in the original pleadings before the court the firm did not make this clear. Now he has instructed lawyers and has won leave directly from the Court of Appeal, which is expected to give guidance in such cases.

practice rules — stating the name and status of the person responsible for a client's affairs. Michael Ross, a partner with the firm, would not comment on the claims, but the firm denies any misrepresentation. Mrs Lee-Haswell, who has been at Pearless de Rougemont for ten years, has a law degree and the firm maintained in its county court evidence that she was experienced in family law and had previously worked as an adviser to the UK Immigration Advisory Service. The firm also argues that the secretary who dealt with Mr Pilbrow's initial request to see a solicitor did not have the authority to bind the firm as to whom he would be referred.

She said that during marital breakdown, vulnerable people put their trust in solicitors. "I feel very upset about this and I am taking the matter to the Legal Ombudsman," Ms Tester says. "I would never have employed Mrs Lee-Haswell had I known. It was a matrimonial matter which involved trying to find my ex-husband. I wasted a lot of time and money, and in the end went to another firm of solicitors, who sorted it out."

There are no barriers to entry

Barristers do not fear competition in advocacy. It may be surprising to many to learn that the Bar no longer has, nor seeks, a monopoly on rights of audience in the higher courts. Too often, we fall prey to the unformed assumption that we have a monopoly and wish to retain it.

Since the Courts and Legal Services Act of 1990, solicitor advocates are entitled to appear in the higher courts, provided that they obtain the necessary qualification. Relatively few have done so and I believe that there are three good reasons for the limited number.

First, the vast majority of solicitors do not wish to practise as higher courts advocates. They see their talents as lying in other directions and are happy to use the services of a specialist advocate. Secondly, the Bar, with its low overheads, is often more cost-effective for the client and the solicitor.

Finally, a number of solicitors have found it difficult to obtain the higher courts qualification; requirements are set by the Law Society. Some believe that these requirements are too onerous, others disagree. Professor Ian Scott, advocacy adviser to the Law Society, said in his 1996 report: "The papers that the [Advocacy Training] board has produced have provided a fair test on matters that advocates going into the higher courts really ought to know. The candidates taking the test are meant to be experienced lower courts advocates. Those who have failed have deserved to fail — often I have been astonished at the ignorance of some candidates."

It cannot be in the public interest for the Law Society to reduce its requirements simply to increase the number of solicitor advocates. The public is entitled to expect that advocates involved in the most serious and complex litigation know the rules of evidence, practice and procedure, and have been trained appropriately in advocacy. If the suggestion is that all solicitors should gain unfettered rights of audience on becoming admitted as a solicitor, the Law Society surely will have to introduce radical changes to the way in which all solicitors are trained to ensure that they are taught the essential requirements of a higher courts advocate.

I have been working to improve training and professional development for barristers to ensure high standards. Flooding the market with "lawyers" who have not fulfilled certain requirements could prove very costly in the long run. The public would be ill-served if we were forced to accept into the profession those "weeded out" by existing standards in education and training. Yet attempts at improving standards are mistakenly described as "barriers to entry". This is wrong. If setting high standards for people who are to be let loose on the public as legal advisers and advocates is a "barrier to entry", it is one we must fight to maintain.

Richard Gerrard
The author is a solicitor with Estates Gazette's online Property Law Service (www.propertylaw.co.uk)

Heather Hallett
The author is Chairman of the Bar Council

Why landlords can no longer lie low

Tenants could win millions of pounds in backdated claims from residential landlords after a House of Lords judgment was passed.

Landlords can now be forced to repay tenants who have paid too much for service charges, in a decision that overrules an established legal principle dating back to 1760. The decision will also affect maintenance costs, notice money, or any other overpayment made because of a legal misunderstanding.

Council, overpayments by tenants could only be recovered if they were made because of a mistake of fact, not a mistake of law. The scrapping of this fine distinction dramatically widens the scope for claims.

Michael Ross, a partner with the firm, would not comment on the claims, but the firm denies any misrepresentation. Mrs Lee-Haswell, who has been at Pearless de Rougemont for ten years, has a law degree and the firm maintained in its county court evidence that she was experienced in family law and had previously worked as an adviser to the UK Immigration Advisory Service.

The decision, which has considerable implications in principle, is potentially very hazardous.

There are defences that landlords can use when faced with claims of this type. One is that it would be unfair to order repayment because the landlord's position has since changed and the money has been spent. Another is that the real reason for the overpayment was not a mistake of law, but the payer's desire to reach a compromise. In either case, the money can be recovered. In their written reasons for the judgment, the law lords said that the courts may evolve new defences in future. No doubt they expect a lot more test cases.

Jay Sharma, of the Law Centres Federation, says: "Private tenants should check payments they have made to landlords and take legal advice if necessary."

Geoffrey Cuting, who heads the National Federation of Residential Landlords, said: "Landlords must ensure they are aware of this decision, which has considerable implications in principle. It is potentially very hazardous."

Richard Gerrard
The author is a solicitor with Estates Gazette's online Property Law Service (www.propertylaw.co.uk)

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OFFICE OF FAIR TRADING

COMPETITION ACT 1998 - CASE OFFICERS

The Office of Fair Trading exists to encourage and sustain competition in business at all levels. It is an independent, non-ministerial government department, established in 1973, and headed by the Director General of Fair Trading. It plays a key role in the enforcement of competition law.

The Competition Act 1998, which completed its passage through Parliament on 9 November, introduces an entirely new regime that will give the Director General enhanced powers to investigate and take action against agreements which restrict competition and conduct which is an abuse of a dominant position. This is an exciting and challenging time for the OFT and, in order to help us meet that challenge, we are looking for enthusiastic and energetic case officers.

The job will be to undertake casework on agreements notified, and complaints made to the Director General under the Competition Act 1998. The work will include making the initial assessment of cases, investigating the more significant cases and drafting decisions and guidance. Case officers will need expertise in competition policy, economics and the relevant law, and will undergo training in those areas where necessary.

We wish to appoint initially a small number of case officers who must have:

- * been working as solicitors or barristers on competition law for at least two years; and
- * recent working experience of EC competition law (Articles 85/86), including experience of dealing with the European Commission DGIV.

In addition, they must have:

- * the ability to analyse complex information quickly;
- * the ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing;

and should also be:

- * able to work under pressure and to tight deadlines;
- * flexible;
- * impartial and objective;
- * self-motivated; and
- * able to work successfully in a team.

The posts are permanent, based in Central London and have a salary range of £30,692 to £45,709.

If you would like an informal discussion about the posts, please ring Henry Emden on 0171 211 8826. For an application form, contact Debbie Marshall, Office of Fair Trading, Room C522, Chancery House, Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1SP (tel 0171 211 8392, fax 0171 211 8773). Closing date for applications is 15 December 1998.

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The Crown Prosecution Service is the Government Department responsible for the prosecution of criminal cases in Magistrates' and Crown Courts in England and Wales.

We are currently seeking to recruit a number of lawyers on a permanent basis, to fill vacancies in the Midlands area. CPS Midlands has branches in Warwickshire, Staffordshire & the West Midlands.

As a Crown Prosecutor you will review and where appropriate prosecute criminal cases, following investigation by others. You will advise police on matters relating to criminal cases. In each case you will consider whether there is sufficient evidence to prosecute and if so whether the public interest requires a prosecution.

Applicants will require two years post qualification experience for level C2 posts (one year for Level C1 posts). We are looking for good team players with excellent advocacy skills and a good working knowledge of the criminal justice system. Successful candidates will need the ability to analyse complex and sensitive information to make decisions, good organisational skills and to work effectively under pressure.

Candidates will be required to explain in their application form and if selected, at interview how the required skills have been demonstrated.

An individual's eligibility, knowledge and skill levels will determine whether they are considered for appointment to Payband C1 or C2.

For further information and an application pack please send a postcard only to: Michelle Moston (REF CP98), CPS Midlands, Area Personnel Office, Colmore Gate, 2-6 Colmore Row, Birmingham, B3 2QA.

The closing date for the return of completed application forms is **Friday 11th December 1998**.

The Crown Prosecution Service is an equal opportunities employer. Employment and promotion are based on ability, qualification and fitness for the work. There is no unfair discrimination on the grounds of sex or marital status, sexuality, colour, race, religion, ethnic or national origin, age or disability.

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Translating the plans of policy-makers into law can be a formidably difficult task. It is much more than a question of simply finding the right words. In drafting a Bill, Counsel need to clarify the Government's intentions and to select the conceptual and legislative structure most appropriate to their aims. As a Bill passes through Parliament, Counsel undertake the drafting of amendments, attend sittings of both Houses and advise the Government on points of law and parliamentary procedures.

This work demands a powerful and incisive intellect, the ability to think creatively and constructively, and the stamina necessary to work under pressure that can often be intense. Just as importantly, it also creates an immensely stimulating career for lawyers right at the heart of government.

Parliamentary Counsel are a small team with their own office in Whitehall. A recruit begins his or her career as an assistant to one of the senior Counsel.

There are now opportunities for barristers or solicitors, qualified in England or Wales, to join an expanding team. In addition to a good honours degree (which need not be in law), you should normally have some professional experience or postgraduate academic experience, or a combination of the two.

Written details and application forms may be obtained from the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, 26 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AY or telephone 0171 210 6644 or 0964, or from Capita RAS, Innovation Court, New Street, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 7JH quoting reference B4007. Completed application forms should be returned by noon on 14th January 1999.

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Commercial Lawyer 2-4 years' ppe

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For further information, in complete confidence, please contact Kate Sutcliffe on 0171 405 6062, 0956 569203 evenings/weekends or write to her at QD In-House Legal, email kate@qdgroup.co.uk

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Partner Designate

London

Our client is a leading international accounting firm, with a strong private client specialism, advising high net worth individuals on wealth protection, both offshore and onshore.

Due to an increasing level of fee-earning activity, our client seeks to make an additional senior appointment in its City office. Situated within the Trusts and Estates Department, the role will focus predominantly on inheritance tax planning, particularly in relation to UK-domiciled individuals. Whilst there is already a significant amount of work to be done, marketing your services to the firm's existing clients will be an important part of the role, working with other offices nationwide.

The successful individual will be an excellent technical lawyer with proven ability in trusts, wills, estates and inheritance tax planning. Interpersonal skills are equally crucial, and persuasive communication skills, together with a proactive attitude and ability to attract work, are a pre-requisite. A demonstrable following will be regarded as strong evidence of this skill.

This role presents a first class opportunity for a talented individual who is either a partner, or on track for partnership, but frustrated by an ethos which prevents you from enhancing your practice development skills further. Our client is not averse to considering joint applications from a team under the right circumstances. The salary and benefits on offer will reflect the seniority of this appointment.

For further information, in complete confidence, please contact Stephen Lacey or Kate Sutcliffe on 0171 405 6062, 0171 736 8726 evenings/weekends or write to them at QD In-House Legal, email lacey@qdgroup.co.uk, kate@qdgroup.co.uk

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Hodders is an established busy practice with 6 offices. A solicitor ideally with a minimum of 2 years PQE is required in the firm's main office to work in a busy litigation dept dealing with a private client caseload. The successful candidate will be an ambitious, self-motivated, energetic individual, with advocacy and excellent communication skills, who is capable of working pro-actively within a team environment.

Apply with C.V. to: Sue Atkins, Hodders Solicitors, 7 Cassell Street, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP13 6RZ.

ALL BOX NUMBER REPLIES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO: BOX No. c/o THE TIMES P.O. BOX 3553, VIRGINIA ST, LONDON, E1 9GA

EUROPEAN LAWYERS

Dell Computer Corporation is the world's leading direct computer systems company and 'one of the top performing big company stocks of the 1990s' (Fortune Magazine - May 1998). In unit terms, the most recent quarter showed Dell growing at just over 90% in Western Europe year-on-year and currently out-pacing the European market by 3.5 times (IDC figures). Dell is now the fastest growing manufacturer in the Western European PC market. This phenomenal success and growth has led to the creation of four new positions within the Europe, Middle East and Africa Law department based in Bracknell, UK, Paris/Montpellier, France and Limerick, Ireland.

All positions require European lawyers with between 4 and 8 years business orientated commercial experience gained from another multinational or major international law firm. These are roles for internationally focused lawyers with the practical, proactive and business-like approach required for a fast moving and challenging environment.

EUROPEAN LEGAL COUNSEL BRACKNELL (European HQ)

As a member of a regional Senior Management Team, you will provide management with commercial support throughout Dell's UK sales territory and European business segments which will involve the supervision of a Contract Manager and a Paralegal. The work will include preparing strategic or major commercial contracts, dealing with international trade, competition and employment law. Maturity, professionalism and strength of character are essential to succeed in this front-line role.

EUROPEAN LEGAL COUNSEL BRACKNELL (European HQ)

Working closely with key internal customers across Dell functional areas including Finance, Human Resources, Services and Marketing, you will manage strong relations across European geographies with all functional customers. This requires a proactive individual with the ability to multi-task and, ideally, some exposure to financing legal issues. Frequent travel to the regions to maintain strong partnership with the business heads will be necessary.

SOUTHERN EUROPEAN LEGAL COUNSEL PARIS & MONTPELLIER

As a member of the Dell Senior Management Team based in the Paris and Montpellier offices, this is an opportunity for a dynamic French lawyer to work with a member of the European legal team in the provision of commercial support and advice to Dell France which will involve supervision of an in-house French Counsel, with the possibility of further responsibilities throughout Southern Europe. Ideally, you will already be working in an in-house environment and be able to assume an autonomous role.

LEGAL COUNSEL LIMERICK (European Manufacturing Facility)

As a key member of the European legal team, you will provide advice on a wide range of matters including procurement arrangements, logistics/distribution activity, customer services, employment and regulatory compliance issues. You will be Irish or UK qualified with at least 4 years commercial law experience.

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If you have the skills and attributes to succeed in a front-line role with one of the world's most successful companies, please contact Dell's advising consultants, NAVEEN TULI or RACHAEL NORTH at Laurence Simons International, Craven House, 121 Kingsway, London WC2B 6PA. Tel + 44 (0)171 831 3270, Fax + 44 (0)171 831 4429 E-mail: naveen@laurencesimons.demon.co.uk Any unauthorised third party or direct applications will be forwarded to Laurence Simons International for consideration.



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We are an exclusively litigation practice, specialising in dispute resolution. All the fee-earners are experienced litigators amongst whom are qualified arbitrators, mediators, adjudicators and insolvency practitioners.

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Please write with a full curriculum vitae including details of experience in confidence to Stephen Ralph, Ralph Hume Garry, Swan House, 37 - 39 High Holborn, London WC1V 6AA.

CPD Co-ORDINATOR & COLLEGE ADMISSIONS OFFICER

HOLBORN COLLEGE one of the most successful independent law schools in the United Kingdom wishes to appoint a Continuing Professional Development Co-ordinator and an Admissions Officer to help with the current expansion of its courses.

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ADMISSIONS OFFICER - to work in the Registry dealing with all aspects of student recruitment including enrolment and student finance. Applicants should be motivated to degree level and be able to cope with a varied workload.

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Applications with CV should be sent to Professor CD Bell, Director by Friday 4th December 1998

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The Lord Chancellor's Department is looking for an enthusiastic and committed lawyer to work within the family and medical law team at the Official Solicitor's Office. The appointment is based in London and is expected to be permanent although secondments or loans would be considered.

The Official Solicitor acts for children and people who, due to mental illness or impairment, cannot manage their own affairs. He is appointed by the court and acts as adviser and representative as well as solicitor for his clients.

You must be a fully qualified solicitor or barrister, and be able to demonstrate:

- a good grasp of legal principles and sound legal and analytical abilities
- the ability to reason and argue cogently and to make balanced judgements
- the ability to express yourself well orally and in writing

- the ability to produce high quality work quickly
- good interpersonal skills
- at least three years experience of a wide range of family law
- an interest in medico-legal issues
- advocacy skills or the potential to acquire them.

Starting salary is £31,500 although more might be available for an exceptional candidate.

For an information pack please call our recruitment line on 0171 210 1303 during office hours. The line will be open up to and including Monday 14 December 1998. Application forms and recruitment information are also available in large print and on cassette.

The Lord Chancellor's Department is committed to equality of opportunity in employment for all who are eligible, on the basis of ability, qualifications, and fitness for work. Applications are invited from all qualified individuals irrespective of race, gender, marital status, disability or sexual orientation.



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Baker & McKenzie's Information and Communications Technology Law Group is independently rated as a leader in its field.

Operating at the cutting edge of the many exciting developments in this area, the Group provides a full range of contentious and non-contentious advice to its truly outstanding client base of suppliers and users of information and communications technology. The IT expertise in its offices in leading centres around the world gives strength in depth and a genuine international perspective to the practice.

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LITTLETON CHAMBERS

The members of Chambers congratulate Michael Burton QC on his appointment as a High Court Judge, wish him well and thank him for his very successful 7 years service as Head of Chambers. We are pleased to announce that Michel Kallipetis QC has accepted the members' invitation to succeed Michael as Head of Chambers.

- Dale Martin and Niran De Silva have joined chambers at the conclusion of their pupillages.
- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
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In the first instance, please contact, in complete confidence, Anthony Gregg or Zofia Robinski on 0171 405 0151. Alternatively, please send a full CV, including the details of your current remuneration, to them at HW In-House Legal, High Holborn House, 52-54 High Holborn, London WC1V 6RL. Fax: 0171 831 6496; e-mails: tomy.gregg@hwgroup.com or zofia.robinski@hwgroup.com internet: www.hwgroup.com



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Investment Funds Lawyers

Linklaters is one of the world's leading law firms with a global network of offices in the world's principal financial centres. We have recently joined with four leading law firms in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden to establish what will become the European International law practice for multi-jurisdictional advice. Our Investment Funds Group is based in London and is an international practice, acting for a range of UK and foreign asset management companies and investment banks. We are looking for lawyers to help us grow our highly successful team.

The position:

- is involved in all stages of our clients' transactions
- sets up unit trusts, open ended investment companies and investment trusts
- designs institutional and retail funds for the investment market
- advises on marketing strategies for investment funds
- works within a team of committed funds lawyers

The requirements:

- up to 3 years' post qualification experience in commercial and corporate law
- committed to making a career as an investment funds lawyer
- previous experience in relation to investment funds or financial services is desirable but not crucial

For further information in complete confidence, please contact our retained consultant, Peter Thompson, on 0171 269 2239 (0171 351 1842 home). Alternatively, please write to him at Michael Page Legal, Page House, 39-41 Parker Street, London, WC2B 5LN. Fax 0171 405 2936, e-mail: peter.thompson@michaelpage.com

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The Lord Chancellor's Department is currently seeking two lawyers for the Criminal Appeal Office. The appointments are based in London and are expected to be permanent although secondments or loans would be considered.

As a lawyer in the Criminal Appeal Office you have responsibility for the management of applications for leave to appeal against conviction and/or sentence made to the Court of Appeal Criminal Division. You will work as part of a team but will have personal responsibility for a caseload.

You must be a fully qualified solicitor or barrister, and be able to demonstrate:

- a good grasp of legal principles
- legal and analytical abilities
- the ability to reason and argue cogently and to make balanced judgements
- the ability to express yourself well in writing



- the ability to produce high quality work quickly
- good interpersonal skills
- a sound knowledge of and enthusiasm for criminal law

Starting salary is £31,500 although more might be available for an exceptional candidate.

For an information pack please call our recruitment line on 0171 210 1303 during office hours. The line will be open up to and including Monday 14 December 1998. Application forms and recruitment information are also available in large print and on cassette.

The Lord Chancellor's Department is committed to equality of opportunity in employment for all who are eligible, on the basis of ability, qualifications, and fitness for work. Applications are invited from all qualified individuals irrespective of race, gender, marital status, disability or sexual orientation.



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LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES 0171-782 7344

LEGAL NOTICES

MONROE PLC (FORMERLY INTERNATIONAL TOOL & SUPPLY PLC) COMPANY MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION
 COMPANY NUMBER: 1407495
NOTICE TO CREDITORS On 17 November 1998 the above named company was placed into liquidation by the court under the provisions of the Insolvency Act 1986. The liquidator is Mr. J. J. O'Connell, 100 Broad Street, London EC2R 1EJ. The date of the meeting of the creditors is 17 December 1998 at 11.00 am. The meeting will be held at the offices of the liquidator. The liquidator is Mr. J. J. O'Connell, 100 Broad Street, London EC2R 1EJ. The date of the meeting of the creditors is 17 December 1998 at 11.00 am. The meeting will be held at the offices of the liquidator.

WESTERN MERCHANTS' INTER-CONTINENTAL PLC
 Registered Number: 20094315
 AND
LIVING VINE LIMITED
 Registered Number: 22000993
 Both in Administrative Receivership
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 48 of the Insolvency Act 1986, that a general meeting of the unsecured creditors of the above named companies will be held on 22 December 1998 at 11.00 am for the purpose of considering a report to be made by the Administrative Receivers. The meeting will be held at the offices of the Administrative Receivers, 100 Broad Street, London EC2R 1EJ. The date of the meeting of the creditors is 22 December 1998 at 11.00 am. The meeting will be held at the offices of the Administrative Receivers.

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DAVID RALPH
 Joint Administrative Receiver



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Commercial Lawyer

NQ - 3 years' PQE

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CGU Life operates a no smoking policy. Closing date: Friday, 27th November 1998.



IN BRIEF

Free State inspired by Cronje

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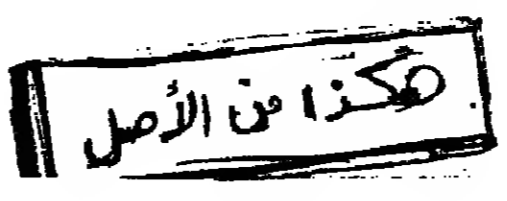
Free State inspired by Cronje

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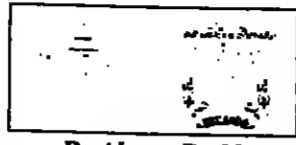
Free State inspired by Cronje



Uefa Cup: British clubs have a point to prove in difficult third-round ties

Liverpool poised for searching test of character

THE Liverpool way is now well and truly the French way. Gerard Houllier, their manager, spoke enthusiastically of vitamins and cognac in the run-up to the Uefa Cup, third-round tie. Buoyed by their victory at Villa Park on Saturday, Houllier, while stressing that it represented "just one big step on a big set of stairs", was impressed with his players' new-found sense of purpose.



By Alyson Rudd

In the wake of the 4-2 defeat of Aston Villa. The club is not planning to lodge an official complaint against Stan Collymore, their former striker, but Houllier's comments that Collymore deserved a red card rather than the yellow he received for his lunge at Steve Harkness will not assist Collymore's cause. "Harkness could have broken a leg," Houllier said.

fight their way out of the spell we are in." So a great deal rests on their performance tonight in proving the Villa Park result was not a one-off and Houllier will not play it safe. "We don't have the team to sit back and wait," he said. John Gregory, the Villa manager, advised Houllier that Vigo, who beat his team 3-2 on aggregate in the second round, would be tough opposition, even without Rafael Berges, their captain, who was sent off in the 3-1 defeat of Villa in the second leg.

Brentford plan to report referee

THE Football Association and Football League may investigate the behaviour of Kevin Lynch, the referee, after the Nationwide League third division match between Leyton Orient and Brentford on Saturday. Lynch, who incensed Brentford supporters by awarding a penalty and free kick from which Orient scored, is alleged to have bowed to them and conducted their stinging of: "Two-one to the referee."

off in the defeat by Liverpool on Saturday. "I will be talking with Stan Collymore, but any discussions we have will be private," Gregory said. "The whole thing will be dealt with behind closed doors and, as far as I am concerned, this is a private issue and will remain so." The FA may take action against the Villa striker for gestures he made to Liverpool supporters as he left the field.



Hendry, left, will be hoping Rangers pick themselves off the floor against Parma tonight after the 5-1 drubbing by Celtic.

Rangers must raise their sights

SO FAR as Dick Advocaat, the Rangers manager, is concerned, the 5-1 defeat by Celtic on Saturday should never have been allowed to take place. His grievance is not so much with the hapless performance as with the thoughtlessness of the Scottish Premier League, who scheduled a gruelling Old Firm match only three days before a date reserved for European competition.



By Kevin McCarra

Parma that even their injury concerns carry intimidating overtones. Enrico Chiesa and Diego Fuser were among those unfit to travel to Scotland, but the gaps in the lineup will be plugged by Mario Stanic, the Croatia international, and Abel Balbo, a forward of long-standing effectiveness in Serie A.

confidence after the mauling on Saturday. A highly-experienced team should be free of trauma. All the same, these are curious times. Colin Hendry, the Rangers centre half, is flattered by the rumours that Blackburn Rovers wish to take him back to Ewood Park as a player-coach and Advocaat was untouched by indignation at the thought of losing the Scotland player. "I have no comment on Hendry," he said. "He is a professional."

tack that Lubomir Moravcik savoured with Celtic. Parma also have Lilian Thuram, who vied with Marcel Desailly for the title of best defender at the tournament as France triumphed in the World Cup. The Italian club, based in a comparatively small city, can afford such players because of the backing of the wealthy Parmalat dairy company.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Packers face up to end of an era

By OLIVER HOYT

TWO months ago, the Minnesota Vikings ended a proud Green Bay Packers' unbeaten home record that stretched for 25 games. On Sunday, the Packers went to the Metrodome in Minneapolis looking for revenge, but instead suffered another dose of the same medicine. Suddenly, deprived by injury of any meaningful running game and relying too heavily on the inspiration of Brett Favre, the quarterback, the Packers have become resigned to conceding the National Football Conference (NFC) Central division that they have dominated for so long to the Vikings, who beat them 28-14.



Elway: landmark

season with their eleventh successive victory, a comprehensive 40-14 win over the Oakland Raiders. In the process, John Elway, the Broncos' quarterback, became only the second player in the history of the National Football League (NFL) to throw for more than 50,000 yards - the other is Dan Marino, of the Miami Dolphins - and Denver supporters are beginning to dare to hope that their team will become only the second in NFL history, after the Dolphins, to complete a "perfect" season.

IN BRIEF

Free State inspired by Cronje

CRICKET: Hansie Cronje, the South Africa captain, gave West Indies plenty to think about just three days before the first Test in Bloemfontein on Monday when he led his Free State side to a remarkable two-wicket win over the tourists. Cronje, who was unbeaten on 58, and Johan van der Wath, a fast bowler, shared a provincial record ninth-wicket partnership of 135 as Free State reached a target of 438 in the final innings - an extraordinary turnaround after they were bowled out for 67 in the first innings.

RUGBY UNION

Woodward delays choice

NOW that his World Cup qualifying duties have been completed, Clive Woodward, the England coach, has more to puzzle over than his opposite numbers from Australia and South Africa. England's opponents on the next two Saturdays, Woodward must select from a background of mediocrity, while Rod Macqueen and Nick Mallett ride a wave of success. No wonder Woodward has given himself another 24 hours before he names his starting XV tomorrow for the match against Australia at Twickenham. The 23-16 victory on Sunday over Italy brought the England coach little comfort, particularly in an area where he believed himself to be well blessed. Matt Dawson is not the force he was at scrum half and Kyran Bracken's back injury may keep him out of contention. Bracken was due to see a specialist yesterday and took no part in Saracens' one-point defeat by Gloucester.

SNOOKER

Williams feels the strain

MARK WILLIAMS, another member of the game's upper echelon to miss out on a quarter-final place in the Liverpool Victoria United Kingdom championship, left Bourne-mouth yesterday expressing concern over an inability to convert solid practice form into victories. "Everything's OK when I'm down at the club, but I couldn't handle the pressure out there," Williams, the world No 5, said after meekly surrendering 9-4 to Dave Harold in the third round. "If I keep playing like that, I'll do well to stay in the top 16."

BY DAVID HANDS RUGBY CORRESPONDENT AND MARK SOUSTER

against Italy and Woodward may feel inclined to give him a further examination against opposition from the southern hemisphere. The Australians are nursing bumps and bruises to three forwards - Andrew Blades, Matt Cockbain and Patricio Noriega - but all are expected to be available for Saturday. They will have a quiet build-up to their final international, although Macqueen, the coach, will be keen to debate with Paul Honiss, the referee from New Zealand, the legality of some midfield decoy moves that were penalised in Paris by Andre Watson, of South Africa.



Dallaglio: returning

The South Africans play the Combined Irish Provinces in Cork this evening with what amounts to their strongest midweek XV of the tour. It includes Andre Venter, the erstwhile flanker, at lock, in opposition to the experienced Mick Galwey, who leads a XV including Emmett Byrne at prop and David Wallace at flanker. They play because Reggie Corrihan and David Corkery have been withdrawn to join the national squad preparing for the international on Saturday against the Springboks. Meanwhile, in a move that could herald warmer relations and a new spirit of co-operation between England's leading teams and the Rugby Football Union (RFU), Donald Kerr is expected to stand down today as chairman of the English First Division Rugby (EFDJR) because he has to move abroad for tax purposes. This follows the resignation of Doug Ash, the chief executive, who has been replaced temporarily by Howard Thomas, formerly of Sale.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Notice for existing Barclaycard Cardholders

The Barclaycard monthly interest rate for existing cardholders will change as follows:

Table with 3 columns: Card Type, Old Rate, New Rate. Includes Barclaycard and Barclaycard Reserve Monthly Interest Rate (1.650% to 1.585%) and Barclaycard Gold Monthly Interest Rate (1.525% to 1.457%).

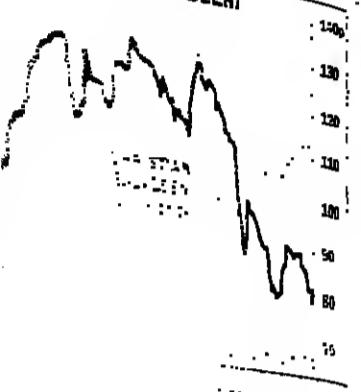
WILLIAM HILL advertisement for a FREE £10 BET. Includes betting odds for Celta Vigo vs Liverpool and Rangers vs Parma. Text: 'FOR FIRST TIME TELEPHONE CALLERS staking £25 or more using Switch, Delta or Solo bank or building society debit cards. RING TODAY 0800 44 40 40'.

BARCLAYCARD advertisement. Text: 'The Barclaycard monthly interest rate on standard balances for new cardholders has also been reduced from 1.375% to 1.302% (Barclaycard Gold from 1.240% to 1.171%) from account opening date, for the first six months coming into effect from 1st January 1999. Clause 4.3 of the Barclaycard and Barclaycard Gold Conditions of Use, Clause 3(ii) of the Barclaycard Reserve Conditions of Use, are amended accordingly.' Includes Barclaycard logo.

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RACING: FIDDLING THE FACTS SCHOOLS IMPRESSIVELY AT HOME

Henderson hopes to earn top marks in Hennessy

By Chris McGrath

EVERY year, Hennessy's reserves of cognac vie for supremacy by three per cent through evaporation, a fraction known in the Charente region as 'the angels' share'.



RICHARD EVANS

Nap: BOOTS MADDEN (3.20 Worcester)
Next best: Siren Song (1.00 Worcester)

For while Suny Bay and Cy for Malta were for the Tommy Gold Cup and Triplemint Gold Cup respectively, the 20 five-day acceptors, nonetheless, promise drama equal to the Hennessy's status as the biggest staying chase this side of Christmas.

Henderson skipped school to see Stalbridge Colonist's win the classic duel between Stalbridge Colonist and Arkle in 1966. 'I had a marvellous tutor, who worked out that we could see the race and still be back in time for me to stick my hand in the air when my name was called at four o'clock,' he said.

last season don't look good — pulled up, pulled up, fell — but this mare has an outstanding chance. She is very good fresh and has a lovely weight (10st 7lb). All we want is the heavens to open.

Good ground, with good to firm pitches, will be by contrast serve the interests of Senior El Betrumi, who shared a nasty fall with Graham Bradley when leading the Murphy's Gold Cup field at Cheltenham nine days ago.

RACING AHEAD
Robert Wright suggests the best value in the ante-post market
HENNESSY COGNAC GOLD CUP
GUIDE TO THE LEADING PRICES

COURSE SPECIALISTS
WORCESTER: Trainers: S. Sheehan, 37 winners from 5 runners, 60.0%...
WINDSOR: Trainers: N. Chantre, 4 winners from 10 runners, 40.0%...

WORCESTER
THUNDERER
1.00 Siren Song
1.35 Camp Head
2.10 Traldro

1.00 COMMANDERY NOVICES HURDLE (2.200; 2m) (7 runners)
101 5-6 GO-DOWNYON 22 (2m) of 25 from 10 runners...
102 10-10 JONAS 10 (2m) of 10 from 10 runners...

3.20 49'S HANDICAP CHASE (SHOWCASE RACE AND TOTE TRIFECTA RACE) (£7,263 2m 7 1/2) (13 runners)
501 12-12 STORM DANCE 22 (2m) of 25 from 10 runners...
502 10-10 MOUNTAIN PATH 22 (2m) of 25 from 10 runners...

1.35 RACING CHANNEL, ALL ON TELEWEST NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE (£2,960; 2m 4 1/2) (8 runners)
201 11-11 MELISSA DERRY 22 (2m) of 25 from 10 runners...
202 10-10 CAMP HEAD 22 (2m) of 25 from 10 runners...

2.10 TOTE PLACEPOT BIRTHDAY WORCESTER NOVICES CHASE (Grade 1, £2,740; 2m 7 1/2) (8 runners)
101 14-14 LORD OF THE RINGS 21 (2m) of 25 from 10 runners...
102 10-10 OCEAN HAWK 21 (2m) of 25 from 10 runners...

2.00 STAKES HANDICAP HURDLE (£6,717; 2m 5) (7)
1-12 JAZZ BOY 25 (2m) of 25 from 10 runners...
1-13 GLOBE RUNNER 25 (2m) of 25 from 10 runners...

2.25 AIR PRODUCTS CLEANFIRE NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE (£3,072; 2m 10) (12)
1 10-10 CHERRY BEE 15 (2m) of 25 from 10 runners...
2 10-10 ROYAL ANGE 15 (2m) of 25 from 10 runners...

3.10 AP NOVICES CHASE (£3,093; 2m 4) (10)
1 P12 B THE ONE 28 (2m) of 25 from 10 runners...
2 10-10 FOUNDARY LANE 9 (2m) of 25 from 10 runners...

1.25 AIR PRODUCTS ACTS HANDICAP CHASE (£3,410; 2m 11) (5)
1 18-18 SMOLENSK 18 (2m) of 25 from 10 runners...
2 10-10 BARKIN EXPRESS 10 (2m) of 25 from 10 runners...

11.40 BANK ON HIM, 12.10 IMPULSIVE DECISION, 12.40 Smart Kid, 11.10 My Lass, 1.45 Kilcullen Lad, 2.20 Aofie, 2.55 The Green Grey, 3.30 Shontaire.

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SHEEHAN on BRIDGE
By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT
This hand appeared in early September:
Dealer South Love all Rubber bridge

KEENE on CHESS
By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT
How to Enter
To compete in the display against Kasparov please call 0640 678884 from the UK...

WORD-WATCHING
By Philip Howard
EPERGENE
a. A duelling sword
b. Champagne district
c. Ornament for a dining table

WINNING MOVE
By Raymond Keene
Back to play. This position comes from the game Nimzowitsch - Tarrasch, St Petersburg 1914.

WINDSOR
YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
1.10 Cdn of hotel 1, Double Trouble (A J McCarty), 10-11, 2. Double Trouble (A J McCarty), 11-12, 3. Double Trouble (A J McCarty), 12-13...

ANSWERS TO WORD-WATCHING
MAKOVETS
a. Cultural society
b. Pet food
c. Body builders

ANSWERS TO WORD-WATCHING
PASSAREE
a. Convenience
b. A season ticket
c. Rope

RACELINE
WORCESTER 101 201
MKT RASEN 102 202
LINGFIELD 103 203
G'HOUNDS 122 222
FULL RESULTS SERVICE 168

CRICKET: TOURISTS FACE SURVIVAL BATTLE AS AUSTRALIA TAKE CHARGE IN FIRST TEST

England exposed by McGrath

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN BRISBANE

BRISBANE (fourth day of five): England, with all second-innings wickets in hand, need 322 runs to beat Australia... THE risks that England accepted in their team selection for the first Test were brutally uncovered yesterday.



McGrath dismisses Gough leg-before, his first victim in a spell of three wickets in six balls

51-minute stay. It ended when Kasprovic sid an inswinger between bat and pad and preceded a carnival for McGrath, who mopped up the remaining three wickets in six balls... Darren Gough, whose batting continues to regress, made a tortured nought, while Alan Mullally was embarrasingly quick, pulling at his first ball in the manner of a man who cannot have been watching what had gone before.

SCOREBOARD FROM BRISBANE

Table with columns for Australia won loss, England First Innings, and various player statistics including runs, wickets, and overs.

Advertisement for 'THE BILL' TV show. Features a large black and white portrait of a man and the text 'DID 180 GRANDS' WORTH OF JEWELLERY BEND A STRAIGHT COP?'. Includes the ITV logo and 'TONIGHT 8:00pm'.

TELEVISION CHOICE

Putting the houses in order

Back to the Floor BBC2, 9.00pm... When Heather Rabatts became chief executive of the London Borough of Lambeth it was said to be the toughest job in local government, her task to reverse years of financial chaos while juggling a £700 million budget.

Cutting Edge: Street Patrol Channel 4, 9.00pm... We do not see any criminals being apprehended in Lorraine Charler's documentary about Neighbourhood Watch but she has unearthed a couple of characters that any film-maker would kill for.

Modern Times: The Magic Factory BBC2, 9.30pm... It must be hard to make a documentary about Alton Towers that is neither a promo nor a hatchet job, but Tim Lambert's film deftly steers a middle way.

Good Evening Ma'am Radio 2, 9.00pm... There is a hidden fascination about the Royal Variety Performance which is amply conveyed here, if only incidentally.

Admirey and Other Diversions Radio 3, 8.15pm... This has been an enlightening series of essays in the interval slot and tonight's contribution, Maturity, is written and read by Tim Parks.

Radio 1 (BBC) 5.30am Zzz Ball 8.00 Simon Mayo 12.00Kevin Greening... Radio 2 (BBC) 6.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.30 Ken Bruce 12.00 John Inverdale 2.00peter Dinklage 5.05 Johnnie Walker 7.00peter Dinklage 8.00 Nigel Ogden 9.00 Good Evening Ma'am 10.00peter Dinklage 11.00peter Dinklage 12.00peter Dinklage

Radio 3 Live (BBC) 5.00am Morning Reports 6.00 Breakfast with Julian Worricker and Victoria Derbyshire 9.00 Nicky Campbell 11.00 The Queen's Speech Live 12.30peter Dinklage 1.00peter Dinklage 2.00peter Dinklage 3.00peter Dinklage 4.00peter Dinklage 5.00peter Dinklage 6.00peter Dinklage 7.00peter Dinklage 8.00peter Dinklage 9.00peter Dinklage 10.00peter Dinklage 11.00peter Dinklage 12.00peter Dinklage

Radio 5 Live (BBC) 5.00am Morning Reports 6.00 Breakfast with Julian Worricker and Victoria Derbyshire 9.00 Nicky Campbell 11.00 The Queen's Speech Live 12.30peter Dinklage 1.00peter Dinklage 2.00peter Dinklage 3.00peter Dinklage 4.00peter Dinklage 5.00peter Dinklage 6.00peter Dinklage 7.00peter Dinklage 8.00peter Dinklage 9.00peter Dinklage 10.00peter Dinklage 11.00peter Dinklage 12.00peter Dinklage

Classic FM 6.00am Nick Bailey's Easter Breakfast 8.00 Henry Kelly, The Hall of Fame Hour and Record of the Week 12.00pm Lunchtime Requests... 1.00am Nick Bailey's Easter Breakfast 2.00 Henry Kelly, The Hall of Fame Hour and Record of the Week 3.00 Lunchtime Requests

VirgIn 6.00am Chris Evans 9.30 Russ Williams 1.00pm Nick Frost 4.00peter Dinklage 7.30peter Dinklage 10.00peter Dinklage 12.00peter Dinklage

Talk Radio 5.00am Bill Swanton 6.00 The Breakfast Show 9.00 Scott Barlow (Knoxville) 11.00peter Dinklage 1.00peter Dinklage 2.00peter Dinklage 3.00peter Dinklage 4.00peter Dinklage 5.00peter Dinklage 6.00peter Dinklage 7.00peter Dinklage 8.00peter Dinklage 9.00peter Dinklage 10.00peter Dinklage 11.00peter Dinklage 12.00peter Dinklage

Radio 3 6.00am On Air with Stephanie Hughes... 11.00 Sound Stories: St George... 12.00pm Composer of the Week: Joseph Haydn... 1.00 The Choice 3: A new collection of essays which waddy... and often controversially... cast an eye on contemporary more.

Radio 4 5.30am (LW) Test Match Special Australia v England... 5.30 (FM) World News 5.35 (FM) Shipping... 5.40 (FM) Weather Forecast... 5.45 (FM) Prayer for the Day... 5.47 (FM) Farming Today with Charlotte Smith... 6.00 (FM) until 7.00am Today With Sue MacGregor and James Naughtie... 8.00 The Choice Presented by Michael Buerk... 9.30 First Nights: Yesterday's Sergeant A policeman's retirement after serving 30 years on the force... 9.45 (FM) Serial: The Interesting Narrative of Colin McFarlane continues reading the memoirs of 18th-century slave Olaudah Equiano... 10.00 Woman's Hour with Martha Kearney... 11.00 Matters: Water, Water A suggested alternative strategy to managing Britain's precious water resources (I)... 11.30 Wanderland Girls by Marianne Carey... 12.00 (LW) News Headlines; Shipping Forecast... 12.00 (FM) News 12.04pm You and Yours Consumer and public service investigations, presented by Tony Pearson... 1.00 The World at One Presented by Nick Clarke... 1.30 Full Orchestra New series Leading orchestras compete in a contest of musical knowledge hosted by Tommy Pearson... 2.00 The Archers (I)... 2.15 Afternoon Play: In Care Leone Eddy's drama about a streetwise teenager and a woman 50 years her senior, Staging Chaucer's Chaucer, Cathy Purcell and Zia Satter (I)... 3.00 The Exchange: 0171-880 444 Robin Lustig invites listeners' views on topical issues.

Radio 4 3.30 Speaker's Corner Richard Max uses the challenge of delivering a witty yet epicurean after-dinner speech of his brother's wedding (I)... 3.45 Cutting Back Geraldine Fitzgerald reads Turner Hodes's story (I)... 4.00 A Good Read with Sarah Lefanu... 4.30 Shop Talk Presented by Heather Pavilion... 5.00 PM Presented by Claire English and Chris Lowe... 6.00 Six O'Clock News... 6.30 Razz! Worth Singer-songwriter John Shuttleworth, alias Graham Follows, talks to Vanessa Felz... 7.00 The Archers 7.15 Front Row Nightly arts programme, with Francine Stock... 7.45 Still Waters Sergio Casca's drama (I)... 8.00 File on 4 Mark Whitaker reports on topical issues with global consequences... 8.40 In Touch Peter White with news for visually impaired people... 9.00 Case Notes Graham Easton reports on men's health issues, asking if the experts on male should be doing more to safeguard his body and mind... 9.30 The Choice (I) 10.00 The World Tonight... 10.45 Book of the Week: Another World Robert Gleister reads Pat Barker's tale (2/10 (I))... 11.00 Late Night on 4: The Now Show Stand-up comedy, hosted by Steve Punt and Hugh Dennis, with Dan Freedman, Nicky Romero, David... 11.30 (FM) Talking Pictures and Simon Munnery (I)... 11.30 (LW) Today in Parliament Roundup of the day's political news... 12.00 News 12.30am The Late Book: A Man in Full William Hoelzel reads part eight of Tom Wolfe's new novel exploring the lives of men in the 1950s, read by Nicholas Hoelzel... 12.45 Shipping Forecast 1.00 As World Service

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FREQUENCY GUIDE: RADIO 1, FM 97.8-99.8; RADIO 2, FM 88.0-90.2; RADIO 3, FM 90.2-92.4; RADIO 4, FM 92.4-94.6; LW 720; MW 720; RADIO 5 LIVE, MW 683, 902; WORLD SERVICE, MW 648; LW 198 (12.45-3.55am). Television and radio listings compiled by Ian Hughes, Rosamary Smith, Susan Thomson, Jane Gregory and John McNamara.

كنا من الأصل

SPORT

TENNIS 48

Agassi's injury raises Hanover hope for Rusedski



RUGBY UNION 47

Dallaglio ready to revive flagging England

Striker may follow Hodgson

Sutton set to spur Ewood Park exodus

By Oliver Holt, Football Correspondent, and Stephen Wood

BLACKBURN Rovers may be forced to start counting the cost of their indecent haste in dispensing with Roy Hodgson sooner than they expected after it emerged last night that the contract of Chris Sutton, their leading player, is inextricably linked to the continuing presence of the manager who they have just dismissed.

Chris Sutton, the centre-forward, who was the joint-top goalscorer in the FA Carling Premiership last season, was so impressed with Hodgson's management that he insisted on a clause in the new five-year contract that he negotiated last season. It states that the striker, who cost £5 million when Kenny Dalglish bought him from Norwich City five years ago, would be allowed to leave in the event of Hodgson's departure.

It now seems that the man Blackburn will turn to for the goals that might drag them away from the foot of the table could be on the brink of leaving himself. Aston Villa tabled an £11 million bid for him earlier this season, but Hodgson, such a great admirer of Sutton that he told his recent signing, Kevin Davies, to study and copy him, refused to countenance any deal. Now that Hodgson has been unceremoniously bundled out of Ewood Park, it is likely that Sutton, who is serving a suspension after his recent dismissal against Arsenal, will become the target of renewed attention from Tottenham Hotspur and possibly Arsenal, their North London neighbours.

After being rebuffed by Hodgson, Villa switched their attention to Dion Dublin, but George Graham, the Tottenham manager, is growing exasperated with the injury problems suffered by Les Ferdinand and Arsenal are in desperate need of new attacking

options as Nicolas Anelka and Dennis Bergkamp struggle to provide them with the goals they need to sustain the defence of their title.

Sutton refused to comment yesterday, but it is thought that he was dismayed at the speed with which Hodgson was dismissed and worried that the lack of commitment shown by many of the club's new signings has left them genuinely vulnerable to the threat of relegation.

If Sutton leaves, it is likely to open the floodgates at Ewood Park. Tim Sherwood, the club captain, has been openly agitating for a move for some time and, if they go, other leading players, such as Tim Flowers and Kevin Gallacher, are likely to become unsettled, too.

Confirmation that Hodgson had indeed been dismissed — Blackburn originally claimed that he had left "by mutual consent" after the 2-0 defeat by Southampton on Saturday that pushed them to the foot of the table — came from Jack Walker, the club's owner.



Sutton: contract clause

"I just can't tolerate our position," Walker said. "I had no alternative but to do what I did. I have had a good relationship with Roy Hodgson and things like this are never easy, but if there is a decision to be made, I will make it. My message to the fans now is: 'I will do my very best to get the best manager in the business.' I will do whatever it takes."

"When we appoint the new manager, he will have my assurance that there will be money available to strengthen the squad. Whatever it takes to get us away from the bottom of the table, I will do."

Hodgson, 51, yesterday began the process of claiming compensation and spoke with John Barnwell, the chief executive of the League Managers' Association. Hodgson was in the middle of a three-year contract believed to be worth £750,000 a year.

Tony Parkes, who yesterday began his fourth spell as caretaker-manager during a 28-year career with Blackburn, also clearly believes that Hodgson was dismissed prematurely. "I think Roy would like it to be known that he was sacked," Parkes said. "He would never desert a sinking ship. He actually wanted more time to put things right, but it seems that Mr Walker wasn't prepared to give him that."

"Roy was a great character, an intelligent man and a top-class coach. He was confident that we could turn things around here and so was I."

As Parkes confirmed that he did not want the job on a full-time basis, two candidates did emerge. Colin Hendry, the defender who left Ewood Park for Rangers in the summer, inferred that he would like to return as player-manager. "I have made no secret of my wish to go into coaching and, although I thought they may happen a bit later in my career, there is no time like the present," he said. Donald Findlay, the Rangers chairman, said that they would let Hendry talk to Blackburn.

Also believed to be on Blackburn's list of potential replacements is Roy Evans, who left Liverpool 12 days ago.

David O'Leary, the Leeds United manager, said that he has dropped his interest in Pierre van Hoojdonk after Nottingham Forest rejected a bid of £4 million. It is the first serious offer for the Holland striker since his refusal to return to the City Ground at the start of the season. "We were ready to take a chance on him, but we were quoted £6 million and I was not prepared to meet that," O'Leary said.



Gwynndaf Evans, of Wales, has an appreciative audience as he drives his Team Seat during the second day of the Network Q Rally of Great Britain

McRae signs off in cloud of smoke

By Kevin Eason

COLIN McRAE flung the door of his Subaru wide and tore off his helmet to cock an ear at the noise of metal grating against metal. It was the sound of his engine disintegrating and the signal that victory in the Network Q Rally of Great Britain was not to be.

Cruel failure is clearly to be the hallmark of this last rally of the world championship season and McRae was the latest victim. The Scot had led from the start at 7.20am on Sunday morning, over tarmac, gravel and mud and yesterday he flew through the forests of Wales, building up a 13sec lead over Richard Burns, his nearest rival.

However, with just two stages of the day left, his car simply gave up. £250,000-worth of mechanical sophistication grinding to a halt amid a cloud of acid, black smoke. Mechanics pounced on the car with an array of high-tech gadgets, including a tiny, remote camera similar to those used by surgeons to explore the ailing innards of their patients. McRae did not need telling that his Subaru Impreza was terminal.

It was all the more galling because he was desperate to finish a disappointing season with a win, particularly as this was his final rally with the Prodrive Subaru team, with which he won a world champi-

onship in 1995, before moving to Ford on a £6 million contract.

His challenge for the world championship ended in Australia earlier this month with a mechanical failure and now his rally on home soil had finished with another breakdown. "I don't know what we have done to deserve this," he said. "We have had to retire from my last two rallies with mechanical problems and that finished my chances in the world championship. This is no way to finish the rally or my time at Subaru. I wanted to go out on a high."

There was at least one beneficiary of the mayhem at the top of the leader board. Tommi Makinen, Carlos Sainz's chief rival for the world championship, was eliminated within hours of the start on Sunday and yesterday saw another barrier, in the shape of McRae, removed. Sainz has only to finish fourth to erase



Burns, the leader, takes a break during a service stop

Makinen's two-point lead and become world champion, but even that seemed a difficult target as problems piled up on the Spaniard.

Sainz slipped back to fourth last night as Burns replaced McRae at the top of the leader board and looked like a potential victor with every passing stage over the muddy hills and through the slippery forests of Wales, establishing a lead of more than 1min 15sec and winning five of the eight stages.

Everyone expected Burns to vie with McRae, but the battle will have to be with another member of the clan. Colin's younger brother, Allister, Jimmy McRae, watched his sons' contrasting fortunes yesterday, commiserating with one,

into a potential podium position in third. Any support that Sainz might have expected from Didier Auriol, his Toyota team-mate, evaporated on the final stage last night when the Frenchman dropped out with suspected clutch failure.

The pressure was clearly starting to show as darkness consumed the final two hours. While Burns roared on, Sainz's driving became ragged and he careered off on the penultimate stage, jeopardising his survival in this event, never mind hanging on to ensure overall victory. Survival must be a priority today, though the pace being set by his young British rivals is likely to be fearsome.

For Burns, 27, victory would be confirmation of his arrival as a true contender in world rallying. He was disappointed that the fight with McRae, the elder, was over but still anticipated a tough climax. "As events have shown in the past two days, anything can happen," he said.

McRae's two-point lead and become world champion, but even that seemed a difficult target as problems piled up on the Spaniard.

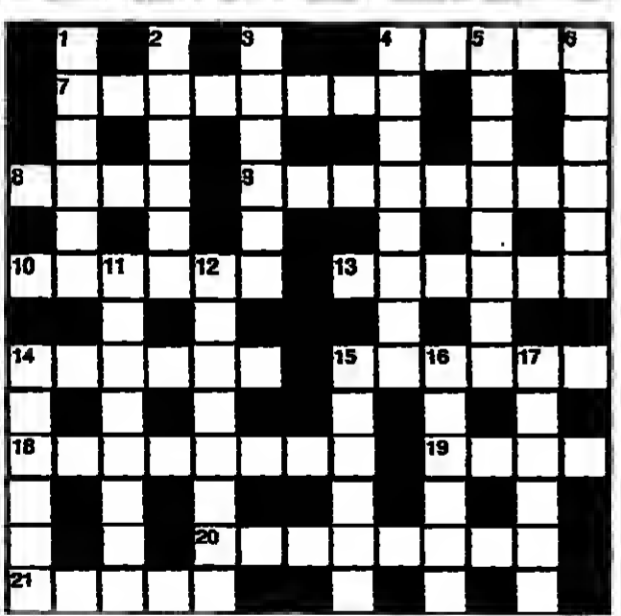
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cjoling the other. He said: "It is disappointing for Colin, but the family hopes rest with Allister now. He is going well and there is a day to go, so you never know."

Sainz cannot afford to relax to be sure of his title, with Juha Kankkunen forcing his Ford Escort Cosworth, on its final

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1571

- ACROSS**
- 4 Sootsayer (5)
 - 7 Impractically idealistic (8)
 - 8 Water creature: metal plate (4)
 - 9 Suicide (pilot) (6)
 - 10 Rugged, solid (6)
 - 13 Elephant driver (6)
 - 14 Complaining, parrot noise (6)
 - 15 Highest point (6)
 - 18 Pass, move across (8)
 - 19 Look stiffen, alluring (4)
 - 20 Large bottle (8)
 - 21 Beneficiary of cheque (5)
- DOWN**
- 1 Cross eyes (6)
 - 2 Plucked-string instrument (6)
 - 3 Unemphasised (5-3)
 - 4 Excite, get going (6)
 - 5 Restless pleasure-seeker (8)
 - 6 One not accepted (6)
 - 11 In unservicable fashion (8)
 - 12 A school disadvantage (6)
 - 14 (Persian) provincial governor as part (anag.) (6)
 - 15 Aeneid author (6)
 - 16 Bird of prey (6)
 - 17 Of horses (6)

SOLUTION TO NO 1570

ACROSS: 1 Plotter 5 Abet 9 Roche 10 Venture
 11 Manslaughter 12 Cedars 13 Stream 16 Dutch courage
 19 Cabinet 20 Aware 21 Lays 22 Clandid

DOWN: 1 Fort 2 Orchard 3 Treasure hunt 4 Reveal
 6 Brunt 7 Theorem 8 Knight errant 12 Codicil
 14 England 15 Poetic 17 Tabby 18 Dell

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Slater salutes English tutors

From Pat Gibson in Brisbane

IT WAS enough to make any Pom whinge as, at the Gabba yesterday, Michael Slater joined the long line of overseas players who have put England to the sword in a Test match and then said how much they have benefited from playing county cricket.

On another day when the England players failed to do what they are supposed to do week-in, week-out for their counties and again betrayed their upbringing, Slater could not speak too highly of the experience that he had gained from playing for Derbyshire last season.

It did not look as though Slater had too much to learn from English cricket when he scored a century in his first Test at Lord's in 1993, celebrating memorably by kissing the Australian badge on his helmet. He went on to score three more hundreds in the 1994-95 Ashes series, but then it all went wrong for him. He was dropped by Australia in 1996 for a perceived lack of discipline after getting out to a particularly crass shot in a one-off Test in India and was left out of five consecutive series, including the last Ashes series, in England in 1997.

He got back into the side in India earlier this year, but it was not until he left Derbyshire at the end of the summer and went on the Australia tour of Pakistan that he finally established himself as a Test

batsmen with a century, which set up the victory that clinched the series.

"My going to play for Derbyshire was one of the best decisions I have made in my career," he said last night. "It wasn't easy at all, but it helped me out tremendously and the experience stood me in good stead for this series."

"The main thing I got out of it was the discipline aspect of being a senior player working with younger guys. I didn't make as many runs as I would have liked (he scored 848 at an average of 35), but the season was a tough one. The Derbyshire wicket was always tough to bat on and it did a lot for my technique and my temperament. I just enjoyed the whole scene over there."

He was enjoying the scene in Brisbane as well after his swashbuckling century had enabled Mark Taylor, his captain, to make the most challenging of declarations, but his smile was matched by that of Glenn McGrath, who laid waste to the England lower order with a spell of five for 19 and then revealed one of the secrets of his success.

"It is something a lot of sports teams in Australia are doing now," he said. "You've come off after a tough day, whether you're playing cricket, netball or whatever, and jump into a hot shower for three minutes, an iced bath for a minute and then back into the hot shower. You do that three times and it flushes all the lactic acid out of your system and makes you feel really good next morning."

More important, however, is the basic technique of one of the world's great fast bowlers, who is now talking about following the example of Slater and playing in county cricket.

Many people England cricketers among them, will argue that we should not allow them the privilege. More to the point, we should be asking ourselves why our players cannot be more like them, valuing the benefits and learning from the experience.



Slater shows his delight after reaching his century

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